



Pentecost Sunday C June 9, 2019

- ◆ Adoration sign-up next Sunday
- ◆ 395 parishioners spend an hour a week in our Adoration Chapel
- ◆ 5 reasons people do not participate in this spiritual devotion
- ◆ 5 reasons to consider having a weekly date with Jesus

What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Eucharistic Adoration is spending time with Jesus who, 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's a bit like the difference between speaking to someone on the phone or behind a screen, and speaking to someone who is *visibly* present to us. We call Eucharistic Adoration "perpetual" when a parish has a chapel where adoration goes on 24/7. Spending an hour each week is a spiritually enriching experience encouraged by popes and a multitude of saints and ordinary people. If spending an hour with Jesus is a spiritually enriching experience, why might people be hesitant to commit? There are many reasons, some of them unconscious. If you are reluctant to sign up, please consider the following six reasons and see if they apply to you.

Five reasons people do not take part in this devotion

1. **"It's something I've 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 tend to say a quick 'No.' But as Christians, we should be open to engaging in something that may enrich our lives spiritually.
2. **"What would I do for an hour in a chapel?"** I will respond to this question later in my column.
3. **"I never know my schedule and I often go away."** Again, many of our adorers have found an hour that is usually pretty good for them. But we know well that people travel. My co-adorer on Thursdays at 6:00am is currently on vacation. I myself go to Ireland for several weeks during the summer. We try to find a substitute whenever we can't make it. If we are unable to find

someone to cover our hour, there's nothing we can do about it, and we just deal with it.

4. **"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 can 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' probably cannot achieve.

5. **"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 our time on a regular basis.

6. **"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, I assume, will shorten our time in purgatory. One of the purposes of purgatory is to cleanse or purify us of all that hinders us from having an intimate relationship with God.

Five reasons to spend an hour with Jesus in our Adoration Chapel

1. **In signing up to spend one hour a week in our Adoration Chapel, we will be doing our bit to help our parish to have prayer 24/7 on our campus.** This is an altruistic reason—each of us doing our bit to help our parish to be more prayerful.

2. **Jesus invites us.** During his life on earth, Jesus spent nights in prayer and invited his disciples to come aside and pray with him. He praised Mary (Martha's sister) for sitting at his feet listening to him. During his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to his sleeping Apostles: *"Could you not spend one hour with me?"*

Research shows that the average American spends 30 hours a week watching television. Many people spend

several hours a week in the gym or playing golf. Others spend several hours a week on social media. Many of these folks say that they don't have time for Mass (our communal prayer) and for *one hour* of personal time with Jesus our Savior who gave his life for us. Does this make sense? I don't think so. I often say to people: We always *make time* for what is important to us.

3. *Spending a holy hour in the chapel each week is like "having a date with Jesus."* It is an interesting thought to think of a weekly hour in the chapel as having a "date with Jesus." In John's Gospel, Jesus says: "I call you *friends*, not slaves." We might want to ask ourselves: Do we *really* want to be friends with Jesus—or are we good enough with being just an acquaintance with him? As we all know, there is a huge difference between being an acquaintance and being a friend with someone. Developing a friendship with someone takes time and effort. If you say you want to be a friend with Jesus, what evidence can you show that this is true? Spending an hour a week in our chapel is one concrete way to develop a friendship with Jesus.

4. *Spending an hour of personal time with Jesus is one way of showing that we are serious about our relationship with him.* In his book *Plan of Life - Habits to Help You Grow Closer to God*, Fr. Robert Landry writes:

As Christians our life must be marked above all by prayer. At our funeral, if we have truly lived a Christian life, the mourners should easily be able to say that the most distinctive thing about us was that we were a person of prayer! Our Christian life is worth, basically, what our prayer is worth.

5. *Spending an hour a week in our chapel is one way to make sure we engage in spiritual reading.*

Suggestions for spending an hour with Jesus:

Surely we have no problem spending an hour with a friend. When we meet, we just start talking and listening to each other—we have a dialogue. And so it should be with Jesus. But for those who may need some help, the following are some suggestions:

- ◆ Our chapel has two kneelers. Adorers usually begin by taking some time to kneel in front of the Blessed Sacrament.
- ◆ ***Spiritual reading.*** Most adorers bring with them a spiritual book which they read. See below for more on spiritual reading.
- ◆ ***The Rosary.*** Some adorers like to pray the Rosary during their hour in the chapel.

- ◆ I assume many adorers have special prayer intentions that they bring with them.

A ***mistake*** we make in praying, whether inside or outside the chapel, is that we do all the talking. We need only to remember to be still and allow God to speak to us.

Pope Francis says:

In his book ***Plan of Life***, Fr. Landry writes:

Pope Francis has said that Eucharistic adoration is his favorite type of prayer. In an interview, he shared that he spends an hour beginning at seven o'clock in the evening before the Blessed Sacrament. He has preached that the sign of a Christian truly focused on Jesus "is adoration of Jesus," and he noted how adoration either crushes or exposes our idolatries, because as human beings if we do not take time to adore God, we will end up adoring people and things.

Fr. Landry continues:

The idols in our life can be revealed by the excuses we give when we don't make time to be with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. For some people, it's work or family or chores. For others, it's television or exercise. For others, it's time with friends. But if over the course of the 168 hours in a week that God gives us, we can't find one to come to praise and thank him, we can be pretty sure we're placing something or someone else before him.

We currently have 395 adorers. **Sam Rodriguez** coordinates the operation of this Ministry by updating the sign-in book each week in the Adoration Chapel. **Thank you, Sam.** For any questions about this Prayer Ministry, email Sam at adoration.ascension@gmail.com.

As you consider signing up to help us continue to have prayer 24/7 on our campus, please keep the above hours in mind. We will have those hours on the back of the sign-up card next weekend. Needless to say, I am well aware that the very late hours of an evening or the first hours of the morning may not be most people's favorite hours. But some of us are 'night owls' and others are willing to make a big sacrifice and come to the chapel when the rest of us are asleep. For example, one working man spends two hours a week in the chapel (12:00am and 1:00am). It would be great if someone was willing to take one of those two hours.

The Prayer of Spiritual Reading

If you have my book on Prayer, you may know that I have one chapter on Spiritual Reading. Since many

adorers engage in spiritual reading in the chapel, I would like to share a few excerpts from my book on Spiritual Reading.

In my introduction to the chapter, I have a quote by Evan Pilkington which says that we should choose a book that “clicks” with us, one that we feel at home with.

The Church has always considered reflective or spiritual reading to be one of the most fundamental exercises of the spiritual life. In and through this meditative type of reading, especially on the Gospels, we come to know the person of Christ and the attitudes and values he embraces. Spiritual reading also nourishes, illumines, and gives direction to our deepest selves, our spirits. Without regular periods of reflective reading, we run the risk of becoming victims of passing fads and allowing ourselves to be led by the wisdom of the world—that wisdom which is contrary to the wisdom of the Gospels and the spiritual masters.

Spiritual reading is different from other kinds of reading. Our approach to spiritual reading should be different from the way we read a textbook, a novel or newspaper. When it comes to spiritual reading, we move into the slow lane.

Our reading—especially of the New Testament—should normally be slow and meditative. We should not have a goal to read x number of pages. Rather, we should be ready to pause, stop, and sit with a word or sentence that speaks to us.

The principal aim is not to analyze, dissect, or gather information out of a sacred passage. The goal of reflective reading is to facilitate spiritual transformation and to allow the sacred words to penetrate our deepest selves for the purpose of spiritual nourishment, illumination, and direction for our lives. Our purpose is to make connections between the text we read and our present life in all its diversity.

In the Church’s Tradition, Spiritual Reading is often referred to as *Lectio divina* (divine reading). There are five steps to this process.

- ◆ *Lectio*: Reading a text
- ◆ *Meditatio*: Meditating on a text
- ◆ *Oratio*: Responding to what we have read
- ◆ *Contemplatio*: Contemplating or sitting in wordless communion with the Word

For more on each of these steps, see my Prayer Book, pages 144-148.

When Feeling Spiritually Dry

Dear Lord, in the midst of much inner turmoil and restlessness, there is a consoling thought: maybe you are working in me in a way I cannot yet feel, experience or understand.

My mind is not able to concentrate on you; my heart is not able to remain centered, and it seems as if you are absent and have left me alone.

But in faith I cling to you.

I believe that your Spirit reaches deeper and further than my mind or heart, and that profound movements are not the first to be noticed.

Therefore, Lord, I promise I will not run away, not give up, not stop praying, even when it all seems useless, pointless, and a waste of time and effort.

I want to let you know that I love you even though I do not feel loved by you, and that I hope in you even though I often experience despair; let this be a little dying I can do with you and for you as a way of experiencing some solidarity with the millions in this world who suffer far more than I do.

Amen.

- Fr. Henri Nouwen

Have a blessed week,

Le Saran

