

# *Manete in Dilectione Mea*

*Remain in My Love*



*A pastoral letter to the people of God of Kokomo, Indiana  
on the love of God present in the Eucharist and  
the proper response such love requires*

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Solemnity of the Assumption  
August 15, 2009



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***“The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host.”***

*Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

**My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Year of the Priest, I present to you my second Pastoral Letter, *“Remain in my Love”* (Jn. 15: 9). The theme of this letter is very dear to my heart, as it concerns the three loves of my life: the priesthood, which exists for and by the Eucharist; the Eucharist Itself; and Mary, Mother of the Eucharist and our Mother. Pope Benedict XVI writes that, “precisely because Mary is with God and in God, she is very close to each one of us. While she lived on this earth she could only be close to a few people. Being in God, who is actually ‘within’ all of us, Mary shares in this closeness to God.” John Paul II wrote that Our Lady “knows our hearts, can hear our prayers, can help us with her motherly kindness. She always listens to us, and, being Mother of the Son, participates in the power of the Son and in His goodness. We can always entrust the whole of our lives to this Mother. Her birth into heaven on this feast of the Assumption gives us ‘an ever new capacity to await God’s future.’” With Mary, I invite you to reflect upon God’s tremendous love for each one of us and His own request and desire for us to “remain in His love.” As Saint John Mary Vianney said, “This good Savior is so filled with love that He seeks us everywhere.”

Even while Jesus loves us so intensely and seeks us everywhere, sometimes we are like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that fail to recognize the very Love of Jesus in their midst. Only after they personally encountered Him in the breaking of the bread were their eyes opened and their hearts burned within them (Lk. 24: 31-32). This same inability to recognize Jesus later caused Jesus to exclaim to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, “Love is not loved enough,” as He explained the reason for the crown of thorns around His Sacred Heart. It is our belief as Christians that God has loved us into existence. His very love holds us in existence and if we “remain in His love” by truly loving Him in return, He will love us back to Himself in eternal life! Yes, we are God’s very love thoughts! How amazing that God can love every human being unconditionally and indiscriminately in a love that never ends! You see, even if we choose not to remain in His love, He still loves us, whether here on earth or in the depths of hell. In fact, that is what hell is, the absence of our participation in His love.

How can we know the love of God? Saint John reminds us that we love and know love because God has first loved us (1 Jn. 4:10). In fact, we are not called to love God on our own, but rather, as we are reminded at every celebration of the Mass, we are called to love God through Him, with Him, and in Him (Jesus Christ) in the unity of the Holy Spirit. All honor and glory and, in fact, all love, belong to our heavenly Father forever and ever – again, in a love that never ends!

To “remain in my love” is what gave Saint Paul the confidence to proclaim to the people of Corinth that “the love of Christ impels (possesses) us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died. He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Cor. 5: 14-15).

This love of God possesses us at our baptism when we die and rise to new life in Christ. From that moment on God gives us the sanctifying grace to “remain in His love” as His adopted sons and daughters. To remain in His love means having that personal and intimate relationship with Love Himself. Affirming this, Cardinal Mercier once wrote to his people, “Every day I want you to simply close your eyes and enter the sanctuary of your baptized soul and there realize that God Himself dwells.” God desires that we love Him as He loves us. To be faithful to the very love of Jesus means not only loving Jesus as a historic figure in time, but loving Him in the fullness of His person and in the way that He asks. Remember, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him (Jn. 14:6). How does He desire that we love Him? He desires our love through knowing Him in Sacred Scriptures, and in His Church, the very Bride of Christ. St. Paul writes beautifully of this fact in Ephesians Chapter 5. Because the Church is the Bride of Christ, our tradition has always seen the Church as our Mother. It makes perfect sense then that Holy Mother Church, like all mothers, has been entrusted with the role of teaching (nurturing), sanctifying (especially in the Sacraments) and governing (loving and guiding us). This is always accomplished through Him, with Him, and in Him in the unity of the Holy Spirit, back to our heavenly Father.

Holy Mother Church has always been faithful to Jesus Christ and the great gift of the Eucharist, which He gave as a gift to His Bride, the Church, the night before He gave His life in love for her. So intense and intimate was His love for us that He desired to remain always with us in the *Sacrament of His Love – Holy Communion!* In this letter, I will explain to you once again about the *Sacrament of His Love*, the Eucharist, and encourage you to enter into Holy Communion with Love Himself! May you be amazed by His love anew, may your hearts and minds be enkindled with the fire of His love – the unending love that impels us to love God and neighbor.

And so it is with great joy that I present to you this pastoral letter encouraging you to consider anew, with Mary our Mother, the love in which you are loved by God. As you read this letter, ask Mary to intercede for you that by the power of the Holy Spirit your heart and mind may be opened to the truth of God’s love for you. May His love for you become so personal, so intimate and so intense that it truly possesses and impels you to become intensely Eucharistic. May your attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Adoration compel you to live lives of perfect charity, as Mary our Mother lived her life in perfect charity, and like Mary, may you remain always in His love!

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and includes the text "Rev. Fr. Ted Dudzinski" followed by a flourish.

Rev. Fr. Ted Dudzinski  
Pastor  
St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church  
St. Patrick Catholic Church

## RESPONDING TO THE GIFT OF LOVE

“Remain in my love.”<sup>1</sup> The essence of Eucharistic Adoration and living a Eucharistic life is summed up in these words of Christ at the Last Supper. Our encounter with the living God is an encounter with Love Himself, and it is necessary to return to the Upper Room to learn how we must respond to this great manifestation of God’s love for us. In this pastoral letter, I invite you to join me in contemplating the face of Christ, so that we, like the Apostles, can truly encounter Him in the breaking of the bread and thus remain in His love.

Each day that we celebrate the Eucharist, we are not merely recalling past events; rather, we are actually there with Jesus and the Apostles in the Upper Room. It is so easy for us to focus our attention on the things we can see and hear with our physical senses, but we must also approach the Paschal Mystery with a sense of faith if we are to experience the spiritual things that are just as real as those we perceive with our senses. I can see the child in the pew in front of me who is fidgeting in his mother’s arms, but do I also see Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles? Do I see how Simon Peter responds to the Lord’s insistence on washing his feet? Do I see John resting his head on the heart of the Master? Do I see Judas as he consumes the choice morsel? Do I hear the words of Jesus as He institutes the Eucharist? These events are re-presented (presented again) to us each time we are at Mass, but do we recognize them? Are we so caught up in the things of our current time that we fail to acknowledge the things of eternity? Are we aware that we truly enter the realm of heaven while we are at Mass? With this in mind, let us turn our thoughts to the events in the Upper Room so that, by meditating on these words from Scripture, we can truly and personally experience them each time that we come to the Lord’s Table.

At the beginning of all four Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, we are told Jesus and His disciples were in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover. To fully appreciate what Jesus does in the following lines, we need to understand how the love of God is revealed in the events of Passover; for as Saint Augustine reminds us, “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”<sup>2</sup> The shedding of the lamb’s (the Pasch’s) blood was the means by which the Israelites would be marked as God’s chosen people. The Jewish people had done nothing to merit such a wondrous gift; it was solely an act of God’s special love. So too, we who approach the Blessed Sacrament are the beneficiaries of God’s unending love for us. The Israelites who participated in the Passover would certainly have seen the great gift of life that God was offering as symbolized in the blood of the lamb because they saw blood as a great symbol of life. God was offering them not only freedom from Egyptian oppression, but the opportunity to participate in His very life, to enter into a covenant relationship with Him. In the Eucharistic prayer, the priest, acting in the person of Christ, extends this same invitation to us.

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<sup>1</sup> John 15:9

<sup>2</sup> Saint Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2, 73

When John the Baptist was walking along the Jordan and encountered Jesus, he told his disciples, “Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”<sup>3</sup> At that moment, the full meaning of the Paschal lamb in Exodus was clear – “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”<sup>4</sup> In the course of the Mass, we too hear the words, “Behold the Lamb of God.” What should be our thoughts and attitudes at that time? We should respond in the same way as John’s disciples who, upon hearing that they were in the presence of the Lamb of God, came and saw where He was staying and stayed with Him.<sup>5</sup> Spending that time with Christ by remaining and staying with Him is the only proper response. To know that I am in the presence of God, love Incarnate, and remain indifferent, is to reject that love. So too, if I do not make my encounter with Christ in the Mass the most important thing in my life upon which everything else depends, I have failed to see that I have before me the pearl of great price for which I must be willing to sell everything in order to possess it.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is important to remember that when we recite the words of the *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, we, like John the Baptist, are bearing witness to this great Sacrament of Love.

But how do we participate in this love two thousand years after the birth of Christ? Generations of Jews who lived after the Exodus from Egypt would have asked this same question about the Passover. The answer can be found in the Lord’s instructions to Moses: “You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and your sons for ever...and when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ You shall say, ‘It *is* the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, for he *passed* over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt.’”<sup>7</sup> Notice that the Passover is not only a commemoration of a past event, but a present reality. In our participation in the Paschal mystery, we too are celebrating a present reality. We who are separated by thousands of miles and hundreds of years from first century Palestine are united in the eternal now to this great act of love that transcends time and space, for nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Returning again to the Upper Room, Saint John tells us, “Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”<sup>9</sup> Obviously, the Apostles were those whom Jesus loved who were in the world, but it likewise applies to us who are still on this side of heaven. When Jesus reclined at table with His Apostles and when He comes to us on the altar, He does so that He might remain with His beloved for all time. If such love would compel Christ to find a way to remain with us even after He ascended to the Father, should not a reciprocal love on our part compel us to

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<sup>3</sup> John 1:29

<sup>4</sup> John 3:16

<sup>5</sup> John 1:39

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Matthew 13:45-46

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 12:24 (emphasis added)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Romans 8:38-39

<sup>9</sup> John 13:1

remain with Him in the Eucharist? “For the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore all have died.”<sup>10</sup>

Knowing that He was to give us His Body and Blood as a perpetual memorial of His love, Jesus first instructs the Apostles on humility. First, Jesus had humbled Himself to become a man; as the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says, “For this reason, when he came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.’”<sup>11</sup> Then on Good Friday, when He was to suffer the humiliation of the cross, He “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”<sup>12</sup> Now, at the Last Supper, Jesus rose, laid aside His garments, and girded Himself with a towel. Just as He had laid aside the privileges of His divinity and girded Himself with humanity at the moment of the Incarnation, in His humility He was about to lay aside even the benefits of His human nature to be present under the appearance of bread. If the humility of God becoming man reveals the vastness of God’s love for us, how much more is God’s love made manifest when He further humbles Himself to be present in the Eucharist. As a sign of that love and in anticipation of the Eucharist He was to give them, Jesus washes the feet of all of His Apostles, including Judas. This same Judas, who less than a week prior had balked at the humble worship of the woman who had washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair,<sup>13</sup> sits in silence, ambivalent to the love manifested in Christ’s humble action. Even after receiving the choice morsel from Jesus – an act by which Jesus demonstrated the special place that Judas had in His heart – Judas responds by leaving Christ’s presence; he fails to remain in Jesus’ love. Before the humble presence of Christ in the Eucharist, are we, like Judas, so caught up in our own ambitions and desires that we are oblivious to the love of God? Do we seek to remain with Jesus, or are we drawn away from Him to the darkness of the night?<sup>14</sup>

We have now reached the moment when Jesus gives us Himself in the Eucharist. “Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”<sup>15</sup> There is neither covenant nor the forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood. So was Jesus just speaking metaphorically or symbolically when He consecrated the bread and the wine? Of course not! Bishop Fulton Sheen said, “Since His death was the reason of His coming, He now instituted for His Apostles and posterity a Memorial Action of His Redemption, which He promised when He said that He was the Bread of

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<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 10:5

<sup>12</sup> Philippians 2:7-8

<sup>13</sup> Cf. John 12:4

<sup>14</sup> Cf. John 13:30

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 26:26-28

Life.”<sup>16</sup> The blood that Christ sheds on Good Friday is the same blood that He gives us on Holy Thursday. The sacrifice that Jesus offers upon the cross physically is one and the same with the sacrifice that He offers sacramentally in the Eucharist. In both, He is the Priest offering the sacrifice as well as the Victim being sacrificed. In that first Eucharist, Christ was looking ahead and uniting that sacrifice to that of the next day; likewise, at each subsequent Eucharistic celebration we are also united to that same sacrifice. When Jesus says “Do this in remembrance of me”<sup>17</sup> we are not merely to remember His loving sacrifice on the cross, we are to participate in it! What love! When the constraints of time would have prevented us from being present, You, O Lord, found a way for us to be there with You so that from Your cross You not only look upon Your mother and Your beloved disciple, but You gaze upon us as well. Help us, O Lord, to respond by fixing our eyes upon You, so that as our eyes meet, we, like Peter,<sup>18</sup> will recognize the great love You have shown us.

After instituting the Eucharist, the Apostles disputed about who was to be regarded as the greatest; after having experienced the love and humility of Christ, they returned to their self-love and egotism. In our own lives, how quickly do we return to our old ways and forget what we experience in the Eucharist when we walk out the doors of the church? When Jesus tells us to remain in His love, He is talking about all eternity, not just for a short moment. Jesus reminds us of that fact when He says, “As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my throne in my kingdom.”<sup>19</sup> Do we realize that our participation in Mass is a foretaste of the heavenly worship, when we shall gaze upon our Beloved face-to-face for all eternity? As we join the angels and all of heaven in saying “Holy, holy, holy”<sup>20</sup>, do we recognize that we are participating in the life of heaven, the beatific vision behind the veil of the Sacrament?

After foretelling Peter’s denial, Jesus asks the Apostles: “When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” To which they said, “Nothing.”<sup>21</sup> When the twelve were sent out, Christ did not abandon them, even though they could not see Him; for it was He who was acting and teaching through the Apostles. At this moment, He is reminding them that He would be present in the Eucharist even if they do not see Him with their physical sight and that through His presence in the Eucharist, He would provide for all their needs. So too, for us now, we lack nothing if we come to Him in the Eucharist. Just as He reassures the Apostles, Jesus tells us not to let our hearts be troubled.<sup>22</sup> He will not leave us desolate; He will come to us and *make His home with us*.<sup>23</sup> If only we knew the gift of God<sup>24</sup> – then we would

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<sup>16</sup> Bishop Fulton Sheen, *The Life of Christ*, 277

<sup>17</sup> Luke 22:19

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Luke 22:61

<sup>19</sup> Luke 22:29-30

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Revelations 4:8

<sup>21</sup> Luke 22:35

<sup>22</sup> Cf. John 14:1

<sup>23</sup> Cf. John 14:18 and John 14:23

remain in that perfect love which casts out all fears.<sup>25</sup> The Eucharist is that perfect love. Do we find our solace in it? Do we turn to Christ in our difficulties, or do we tend to rely upon ourselves? Christ asks us to come to Him in our need, for by doing so, God is glorified. “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”<sup>26</sup> In the offering of bread and wine, we ask God in Jesus’ name to transform them into the Body and Blood of Christ. As Jesus had promised, He Himself performs this saving work – He is the one who acts through the priest to make this happen. Thus, it is through our celebration of the Eucharist that the Father is glorified.

In addition to all of these wonderful gifts already mentioned, Christ gives us and the Apostles the gift of peace.<sup>27</sup> This peace is not the same as the peace of the world; the peace of Christ is a peace that can come only through a relationship with Him who takes away the greatest barrier to peace – sin. Such peace can be found in the Eucharist. By encountering the love of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, we acquire the grace to overcome sin and thus achieve the peace that He alone can give. “Lord, I come sick to my Savior, hungry and thirsty to the Fount of Life, needy to the King of Heaven, a creature to its Creator, desolate to my loving Comforter.”<sup>28</sup> Do I see how I am dependent upon the love of God? When I kneel before Him in the Eucharist, do I ask Him to transform me and to root out the sin in my life so that I may know His peace?

When Jesus continues by speaking about Him being the vine and us being the branches, He is stressing the importance of staying rooted in His Eucharistic heart. If we fail to abide in Him, to remain in His love, we will bear no fruit.<sup>29</sup> The ancient Eucharistic hymn, *Ubi Caritas*, tells us that where charity and love are, there is God; the opposite is equally true – when God is not present, there is no true charity and love. Thus, remaining in love and remaining in God are synonymous. But how do we do that? To remain in God’s love, we need to remain in His presence, especially before His real presence in the Eucharist. God’s presence and love are constant; it is our response to that love which is variable. Satan constantly tries to distract us and tempt us to choose the love of lesser things instead of remaining in that love. Saint John tells us, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”<sup>30</sup> The life of grace is essentially about remaining in this love, which surpasses all other loves, and disposing ourselves to receive His gift of grace rather than chasing after the empty promises of the evil one. In my day-to-day life, do I make my time with Christ, especially in the Mass and Adoration, the highest priority of my day? Do I give into Satan’s temptations to give my heart to the things

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. John 4:10

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 1 John 4:18

<sup>26</sup> John 14:13

<sup>27</sup> Cf. John 14:27

<sup>28</sup> Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book 4, Chapter 2

<sup>29</sup> Cf. John 15:4

<sup>30</sup> John 15:13

which are not God? Are my relationships with others rooted in my love of God, or are they rooted in selfishness and lies, and thus destined to bear no fruit?

The Apostles clearly understood the connection between His impending death and the Eucharist He had just given them, and it was for that reason that they expressed their concern about where Jesus was going. To calm their fears, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, and He also told them, “So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”<sup>31</sup> Where do we continue to see Christ, who fills our hearts with joy, if not in the Eucharist? Who produces the fruit of joy in us, if not the Holy Spirit whom we receive at Confirmation? The Eucharist is the memorial of Jesus’ love for us, and the Holy Spirit is the very love between the Father and the Son. Christ’s two great gifts – the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist – are intimately connected. At each Mass, the Holy Spirit comes down upon the bread and wine at the epiclesis and makes Christ’s love manifest for us as the priest consecrates them into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Do I ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten me to see the love of God? Do I respond to the Holy Spirit’s promptings to draw near to Jesus in Holy Communion?

Jesus then prayed for His Apostles that they be sanctified in the truth and that they be one.<sup>32</sup> However, Jesus not only asked His Father to do these things for the Apostles, but He gave the surest means for them to come about – the Eucharist. True love, agape love, desires the best for the beloved; therefore it is logical that Jesus would pray for our sanctity and unity. In the Eucharist, we receive Him Who is all-holy; therefore, frequent reception of the Eucharist has the effect of sanctifying us. It is for this reason that Pope Pius X said, “Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven.”<sup>33</sup> Love desires union with the beloved. In the Eucharist, the Great Lover of our souls is united with us. He unites us not only with Himself, but He broadens that love to include a union with others as well. In the Eucharist, we not only respond to the love of Christ, but we also learn how to love Him present in others. Thus Saint John says, “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.”<sup>34</sup>

Having shown the depth of His love in the Eucharist, Jesus then proceeded to the path of His Passion where the depth of His love would be manifested on the cross. Before such displays of selfless love, let us echo the hymn of praise sung by the Apostles as they crossed the Kidron Valley that separated the Upper Room from the Garden of Gethsemane: “O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!”<sup>35</sup> How do we thank Him for such love? By responding with love in return. As Pope John Paul II said, “Thus it is also a response that

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<sup>31</sup> John 16:22

<sup>32</sup> Cf. John 17:17-21

<sup>33</sup> Pope Pius X, *Tra le Sollecitudini* (1903)

<sup>34</sup> 1 John 4:7-8

<sup>35</sup> Psalm 118:1

tries to repay that love immolated even to the death on the cross: it is our 'Eucharist,' that is to say our giving Him thanks, our praise of Him for having redeemed us by His death and made us sharers in immortal life through His resurrection."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*, 3

## RENEWING OUR LOVE

Having reflected upon the inexhaustible love Christ has displayed for us when He instituted the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, we know that we must respond to that love. We must now go even further and consider the concrete means we must put in place so that our Eucharist life never grows stale. John Paul II exhorted us, “But we must always take care that this great meeting with Christ in the Eucharist does not become a mere habit, and that we do not receive Him unworthily, that is to say, in a state of mortal sin.”<sup>37</sup> Eucharistic life entails not only attendance at Sunday Mass; it includes all the things that we daily do to reaffirm our love for Him who loves us. In many ways, it is similar to the affirmation of love between a husband and wife. A strong marriage requires that both spouses renew their love daily in word and action. Jesus never fails in daily manifesting His love for us, His Bride. Do we reciprocate this love in our day-to-day lives by expressing our love in the words of our prayers and in the actions of virtuous living?

Love in word is inseparable from love in action. If a husband and wife were to only express words of love on their wedding day, or even once a week, their marriage would certainly be in trouble. So too, if we only vocalize our love for Christ in the Eucharist by attending Mass on Sunday, our relationship will not be what it should be; we need to turn to God in prayer and speak with our Beloved several times each day. At the same time, if a husband or wife were to say “I love you” all the time but would not express that love in action, the words would ring hollow. So too, our prayers must lead to actions as concrete expressions of our love, lest our prayers be like those of the Pharisees. Pope John Paul II said, “Proclaiming the death of the Lord ‘until he comes’ (1 Cor 11:26) entails that all who take part in the Eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely ‘Eucharistic.’”<sup>38</sup> The union of love in word and action has been part of God’s plan since the beginning, as can be seen in His relationship with the chosen people. “And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”<sup>39</sup>

Renewing our love daily can take many forms, but none greater than our **active** participation in the Mass. Active participation does not mean that we have to be a reader or an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion or involved in some other ministry in order to participate fully. Active participation is about focusing all the efforts of our mind and body to appreciate the mystery of love we are witnessing. In the great treatise on Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council declared: “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and

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<sup>37</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 7

<sup>38</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 20

<sup>39</sup> Deuteronomy 10:12

prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.”<sup>40</sup> If a husband and wife merely dwell in the same residence, living two separate lives while physically in each other’s presence, their love for one another will deteriorate. So too, if we are only physically present at Mass without focusing all of our attention on the words and actions of the Liturgy, our love for our Eucharist Lord will become commonplace. Those in love constantly want to know more about the beloved; they seek to find ways to fill even the smallest actions with great love. As we seek to understand the Liturgy and prayers more, we show Christ that we want to know Him more so as to love Him more.

Love that has grown stale is often the result of taking the other for granted. In the same way that a husband and wife can lose sight of the gift that the other person is, we can gradually lose our appreciation for the love of Christ. Actively renewing our love for another requires recognizing that everything is a gift; such an attitude helps us to develop the virtue of gratitude. The word “Eucharist” literally means “thanksgiving”; as such, gratitude must be at the heart of living a Eucharistic life. Just as a wife never tires of hearing her husband say that he loves her, so too Jesus takes great joy in seeing us frequently express our gratitude to Him by offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Pope Paul VI said, “It is desirable to have the faithful in large numbers take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass each and every day and receive the nourishment of Holy Communion with a pure and holy mind and offer fitting thanks to Christ the Lord for such a great gift.”<sup>41</sup> Not only do we experience the love of Christ in the Eucharist, our active participation in the Paschal Mystery is the most fitting way for us to return that love.

Our active participation in the Mass must begin well before we enter the doors of the church. In a marital relationship it is not always words or deeds themselves that express the greatest love, but rather the thoughts and actions that went into them. Through such preparations one spouse communicates to the other that he or she is valued, that he or she is worth all of the time and effort that goes into the preparations. Does not our Lord deserve at least the same level of preparation? How many Masses have we attended unprepared – thus undermining the love that we are expressing towards our Lord? In Saint Alphonsus de Liguori’s book *The Holy Eucharist*, he writes of a Cardinal Bona who addresses the question, why is it that “so many souls, after so many communions, make so little advance in the way of God? And he answers, ‘The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who eats it;’ that is to say, in the want of due preparation on the part of the communicant.”<sup>42</sup> The fathers of the Second Vatican Council reiterated these same sentiments when they wrote, “But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain.”<sup>43</sup> In coming with the right dispositions, Jesus’ charge to the

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<sup>40</sup> Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48

<sup>41</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 66

<sup>42</sup> Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Holy Eucharist*, 226

<sup>43</sup> Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 11

disciples is also issued to us: *Prepare carefully the “large upper room” needed for the Passover meal.*<sup>44</sup>

What does proper preparation for participating in the great sacrament of love entail? There are both a distant and a proximate preparation, that is to say both an internal and an external preparation. The distant preparation includes reading and reflecting upon the readings that will be used in the course of the Liturgy. Certainly, reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is also part of this distant preparation so that we are prepared to receive the Lord worthily. The proximate preparation begins even before Mass begins. If we don't spend some time in silence and reflection at least ten to fifteen minutes before Mass, our minds will still be filled with the chaos and commotion of our outside lives when Mass begins. As a sacramental people who see the connection between external signs and interior realities, we surely must acknowledge the importance of various types of external preparation. For example, the clothing that we put on before coming to Mass has an impact on the way that we live the Mass. The clothes themselves do nothing magical, but they do reflect our internal dispositions and serve as a reminder to us of the grandeur of the Mass. As well, they are a way of showing that Jesus deserves our very best. What young man or woman doesn't give great attention to external appearances while dating and courting? It is not because the other person would love us any less because of how we look; rather, it is an expression of our love for the other person. In the same way, wearing our “Sunday best” for Mass is not about earning Christ's love or even about trying to impress Him; rather, it is an external expression of our love. Similarly, our postures give expression to our dispositions. When we kneel, we are expressing our humility before our Creator, and when we stand we acknowledge His presence and our willingness to hear His teaching. In the first-century, the teacher would sit as an expression of his position of authority and knowledge; by standing, the student submitted to that authority and sought to acquire the knowledge and wisdom offered by the teacher. Thus, our postures at Mass are significant. If we are focusing on our own comfort (slouching as we stand, sitting on the edge of the pew as we kneel, etc.) we are placing our love of self ahead of our love for the Lord. No wife would question the love of her husband if he were physically unable to make some particular gesture of love, but if he is able and merely chooses not to, his body language communicates indifference towards his wife. Such indifference truly is the polar opposite of love. For hatred means being passionate enough to take a particular stance, but indifference says that the other person isn't even worth our effort one way or the other. When we make adequate preparation, we place ourselves at the font of grace and are better disposed to receive all the graces Jesus wants to give us in the Sacrament; we need His assistance so that His love will produce the appropriate effect in our souls. Thus, Paul VI said, “Render Him due thanks and praise and especially to ask help to defend their souls against anything that may lessen the efficacy of the sacrament and to do everything in their power to cooperate with the action of Christ who is so intimately present.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 47

<sup>45</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 126

In addition to the preparations laid out above, it is imperative that we examine how we form our conscience, for a delicate conscience is full of love and incompatible with indifference. Someone who is truly in love takes great diligence to avoid anything that might be hurtful or displeasing to the beloved. It is incomprehensible for someone in love to think, “How many hurtful things can I get away with before upsetting my beloved?” We must ask ourselves: in our relationship with Jesus, do we flee from sin and even the semblances of sin, or do we have a minimalist approach towards sin and our love of God? Therefore, Cardinal Ratzinger, before becoming pope, rightly concluded, “The conscience is the inner aspect of the Lord’s presence, which alone can render us capable of receiving the Eucharistic presence.”<sup>46</sup>

Conscience formation is not only a preparatory action before approaching the Blessed Sacrament; it is also a concrete effect of receiving the Lord into our hearts. When we receive the Sinless One in Communion, the disparity between our lives and the Christian ideal (imitation of Christ) becomes apparent. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the concrete things we must change in our lives to be more like Him Whom we love. “The adoration of the Lord in the sacrament is also an education in sensitizing our conscience...Anyone who gazes upon the face of the Lord, which the servants of the Sanhedrin and Pilate’s servants have spat upon, which they have slapped and covered with spittle, will see in his face the mirror of our violence, a reflection of what sin is, and their conscience will be purified in the way that is the pre-condition for every social reform, for every improvement in human affairs.”<sup>47</sup>

In our ongoing efforts to renew our love for Jesus in the Sacrament, we must consider the times that we are not in front of His Eucharistic presence. When a husband is not in the presence of his wife, it doesn’t mean that he stops loving her. Quite the contrary is true; his very desire to be with her manifests the love that he has for her. When he cannot be in her physical presence he finds multiple other ways to be as close to her as possible – hanging up her picture, constantly thinking about her, even sending her gifts until they are together again. In the spiritual life, a spiritual Communion is one of the best ways we can continue to express our love when we cannot be in Christ’s Eucharistic presence. A spiritual Communion consists of an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him.<sup>48</sup> Through it, we show our Lord that we are thinking about Him, that we wish to offer Him the gift of ourselves at every moment of every day in the same way that He constantly thinks of us and offers Himself as a gift to us. Saint John Vianney often made spiritual Communions, and advised, “When you awake in the night, transport yourself quickly in spirit before the Tabernacle, saying: ‘Behold, my God, I come to adore You, to praise, thank, and love You, and to keep You company with all the Angels.’”<sup>49</sup> Through spiritual Communions we invite Christ to be present in every facet of our lives. It is never sufficient for those in love to

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<sup>46</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us – The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 105

<sup>47</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us – The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 98

<sup>48</sup> cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, P. 3, q. 30, a.1.

<sup>49</sup> Saint John Vianney as accessed on <http://www.therealpresence.org>

share only parts of themselves and their lives; those in love invite the beloved to share in every aspect of their lives. Therefore, Ratzinger explains how our love of Christ must extend beyond what takes place in the Liturgy. He says, “It becomes clear that ‘cult’, seen in its true breadth and depth, goes beyond the action of the liturgy. Ultimately, it embraces the order of the whole of human life in Irenaeus’ sense. Man becomes glory for God, puts God, so to speak, into the light (and that is what worship is), when he lives by looking toward God.”<sup>50</sup>

Renewal of love best takes place in the presence of the beloved. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but presence is required to make love increase in a lasting way. Therefore, time spent with Christ (Eucharistic devotion) in addition to the time spent with Him at Mass is the most efficient means for renewing our love. Thus, Pope John Paul II said, “Adoration of Christ in this sacrament of love must also find expression in various forms of Eucharistic devotion: personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Hours of Adoration, periods of exposition – short, prolonged and annual (Forty Hours) – Eucharistic benediction, Eucharistic processions, Eucharistic congresses.”<sup>51</sup>

I have spoken of only a few ways to keep our love for Jesus new each day. Love is creative and constantly looks to find additional ways to express itself. As the many saints in the Church’s history would attest, there is no limit to the number of ways that we can respond to the ineffable love of God. Thus, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council said, “Indeed, in order that love, as good seed may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept His Will, and must complete what God has begun by their own actions with the help of God's grace. These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 20

<sup>51</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 3

<sup>52</sup> Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 42

## MEANS FOR BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

In my first pastoral letter, I spoke of the way that Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life – is the answer to all of our social ills; it is only through Him that we are able to build a civilization of love. Throughout that first letter, I stressed the importance of growing in sanctity, cultivating virtues, extending our love in union to all peoples, and developing an authentic prayer life. When I said that Jesus is the answer for all these things, I didn't mean it in a generic or theoretical way. Jesus is the concrete answer. However, He doesn't press His love on us. If we are sincerely looking for the answer that He alone can give, we must freely come to Him to abide in His love. I reiterate now what I said then: Christ wants us to participate in His love for all mankind. If I want to grow in sanctity, I must go to the greatest means Christ has given us for that purpose – the Eucharist. If I want to cultivate a life of virtue, I must go to Him who is the Exemplar of all virtue, to Him who gives the means to sustain that virtue – in the Eucharist. If I want to extend my love in union to all peoples, I must go to the source of unity, the means and expression of our unity with God and with others – the Eucharist. If I want to develop an authentic prayer life, to engage in that conversation with my God, I must go where I can speak to Him most directly, face-to-face – in the Eucharist.

If we think that we are able to bring about social justice without being intimately connected with Christ in the Eucharist, we are deceiving ourselves. He is the One who sustains our efforts; on our own, we will grow weary and our love will fade. It is necessary to encounter the living God, the Just One, He who is Love so that we might always have that most excellent example of justice and love before our eyes. Christ says to us, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and **learn from me**; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."<sup>53</sup> This is the only time in all of Scripture that Jesus directly tells us to learn from Him. To learn how to live social justice, we must come to Him. In the Eucharist, He awaits with great gentleness and lowliness for us to cast our burdens onto Him and to learn to imitate His love. "In contrast with the culture or anti-culture of death which traffics with arms, which builds massive systems of destruction, which legitimizes abortion, which authorizes research using human embryos, Jesus defines himself and gives himself to us as 'Bread of Life.'"<sup>54</sup>

Our Eucharistic Lord is not only the answer to all of society's ills; He is the answer to *every* question. Have we sought His assistance in living out the Church's teachings on social justice? Do we realize that by encountering the Sacrament of Love, we learn to move beyond giving others only what is due to them? Having received this undeserved love, we must respond in the same way that Jesus told His Apostles: "You received without pay, give without pay."<sup>55</sup> How much more do these words apply to us who receive Him in the Eucharist?

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<sup>53</sup> Matthew 11:28-29 (emphasis added)

<sup>54</sup> Archbishop Juan Francisco Sarasti Jaramillo of Cali as quoted in Zenit, October 7, 2005

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 10:8

## ADORING THE BELOVED

Having established the importance of living a Eucharistic life and most importantly of spending time with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, we must consider how we are to offer our Lord the Adoration that is due to Him. When we kneel before His physical presence, we offer our prayer in a way unlike any other; merely doing a little spiritual reading or reciting vocal prayers is not enough to adequately express our love. What then is at the heart of Adoration? Adoration is about looking upon our beloved and Him looking at us. For the couple who are deeply in love, words cannot suffice to describe their love; so too for us adoring our Lord, words fall short of the love we wish to communicate to each other. “Communicating with Christ means having fellowship with him. That is why Communion and contemplation belong together: a person cannot communicate with another person without knowing him. He must be open for him, see him, and hear him. Love or friendship always carries within it an impulse of reverence, or adoration. Communicating with Christ therefore demands that we gaze on him, allow him to gaze on us, listen to him, get to know him. Adoration is simply the personal aspect of Communion. We cannot communicate sacramentally without doing it personally.”<sup>56</sup>

Since opening the Adoration Chapel here in Kokomo, many people have asked me how to engage in contemplation while before the Blessed Sacrament. Countless people have asked me, “What is done for a whole hour alone with Jesus?” When asked similar questions, Saint Alphonsus responded, “We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks. We ask, what does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a clear fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a splendid table?”<sup>57</sup> The person in love never complains about having to spend time with the beloved, nor is he ever at a loss for how to spend time with her. When we contemplate the love of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, we too don’t need to worry about how to pass the time. Spending time reading (especially using Scripture in meditation) can aid us in contemplating the mystery before us, but we must be sure that it doesn’t replace expressing our love. Contemplation also entails taking time to know and appreciate the love that Christ has for us. In his letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul exhorts us to “know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”<sup>58</sup> Christ doesn’t *need* our adoration (although He certainly deserves it), but He *wants* us to adore Him so that He can give *us* the gift of Himself and fill us with His fullness. Knowing that we are the beneficiaries when we come to Christ in Adoration, how can we be anything but grateful for such a gift? “When you see It (the Body of Christ) exposed, say to yourself: thanks to this Body, I am no longer dust and ashes, I am no more a

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<sup>56</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us – The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 97

<sup>57</sup> Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Holy Eucharist*, 127-128

<sup>58</sup> Ephesians 3:19

captive but a freeman: hence I hope to obtain Heaven and the good things that are there in store for me, eternal life, the heritage of the Angels, companionship with Christ."<sup>59</sup>

When we come to acknowledge the great gift we have in being able to adore Christ every hour of every day in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, our appreciation for that gift will naturally overflow into the way that we live the Mass and our day-to-day lives. Adoration and active participation in the Mass are essential elements in developing our love; the maturation of love in one helps us to more fully live our love in the other. The more that we spend personal time with Christ in Adoration, the more we will desire to receive Him at Mass. Likewise, our attendance at Mass will stir our hearts to want to spend even more time with Him in Adoration. It is for this reason that the then Cardinal Ratzinger said, "Adoration is not opposed to Communion, nor is it merely added to it. No, Communion only reaches its true depths when it is supported and surrounded by adoration. The Eucharistic Presence in the tabernacle does not set another view of the Eucharist alongside or against the Eucharistic celebration, but simply signifies its complete fulfillment."<sup>60</sup>

As we contemplate Christ, physically present in the Eucharist, our eyes are opened to see how Christ is always present in our lives. The person truly in love with God sees the hand of God in every moment of every day, not just in the "spiritual moments" of the day. Reflecting on the beauty of nature, the strength of the wind, and even on how our own bodies work – in all these things, we see the loving hand of God, and thus, seek to show Him love in return. Pope John Paul II said, "To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize him wherever he manifests himself, in his many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood."<sup>61</sup> Even though all of nature and the entire universe lead us to contemplate the love of God, that contemplation only strengthens our desire to see Him face-to-face and to contemplate His love while being in His presence at the same time. A young man may be moved to think about his beloved when he sees her picture, hears her favorite song, or tastes her favorite food, and those thoughts are fine when he cannot be with her. However, they are nothing in comparison to actually being in her presence. Those thoughts actually spur him on to return to his beloved as soon as possible. So too, it must be for us in our contemplation of Christ. The disciples on the journey to Emmaus certainly recognized Jesus partially as they made their journey in His presence, but they did not fully come to realize who He was until Jesus manifested His presence in the breaking of the bread.<sup>62</sup> Do we spend time each day in contemplating the love of God, or are we too wrapped up in the business of our day? As we develop eyes of faith, do we see the hand of God in our lives? Does our contemplation of God in our daily lives compel us to kneel before His presence in the Eucharist in the greatest form of

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<sup>59</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 134

<sup>60</sup> Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 90

<sup>61</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 6

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Luke 24:31

contemplation? “Before this mystery of love, human reason fully experiences its limitations.”<sup>63</sup> Therefore, contemplation is required, for in contemplation Jesus can teach us how to love Him in spirit and in truth, not merely in the ways that our human reason can calculate. Contemplation is not an emptying of our mind; quite the contrary, it is an elevation of our mind to see things as they truly are (seeing them the way that God sees them). Hereby, Jesus shows us how He wants us to love Him – by freely accepting His love and abiding in it. Whenever we give someone a gift as an expression of our love, what is it that we want in return? What we want is for the other person to freely show appreciation for that gift by saying “thank you” and by making use of the gift. If we were to give a gift and the person placed it in a closet and never used it, we would rightly feel that our love was not reciprocated. God is the initiator; He is the one who gives us the Gift of His Son. As the recipient of this Gift, we return that love by graciously receiving it and frequently making use of it. This is what we do in contemplation – God shows us how to receive the Gift of His love, and we learn to return that love by better disposing ourselves to receive that Gift.

Here in the early months of this Year of the Priest, it is imperative that we consider and emulate the life of Saint John Vianney. The Cure d’Ars spent many hours before the Blessed Sacrament, from which he received the graces necessary for all the other things which God had called him to do. God is not outdone in generosity, so when we, like John Vianney, seek to be with our Lord, Jesus will come to us and make His home in our hearts. Pope John Paul II exhorted us, “Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease.”<sup>64</sup> Being generous with our time by coming to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is the first part. The second part, the contemplation in which we engage once we are before our Lord, is even more important. That holy priest of Ars reminds us, “To pray well there is no need to talk a lot. One knows that the good God is there in the holy tabernacle. One opens his heart to him, one rejoices in his presence; this is the best prayer.”<sup>65</sup> Let us not be afraid to approach the Lord because we do not know what to say; for, when we approach Him, He will supply whatever is necessary. But we must supply the only thing that God cannot – ourselves. For the only thing lacking in this great sacrifice of God’s Love is our participation in it.<sup>66</sup> Our participation in that love must go beyond trite words and appearances. For love is never satisfied until there is a total union with the beloved. On this side of heaven, that union will often fall short, but when we are in contemplation with our loving God in the Eucharist, we are united to Him in a way that is only matched by that heavenly union. Similarly, Bishop Sheen said, “Correspondence by letter, or by speech, cannot satisfy that instinctive yearning of two hearts to be lost in one another. There must, therefore, come some great ecstatic

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<sup>63</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 15

<sup>64</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 3

<sup>65</sup> As quoted by Scott Hahn in *The Fourth Cup*

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Colossians 1:24

moment in which love becomes too deep for words; this is the communion of body and blood with body and blood in the oneness which lasts not long, but is a foretaste of Heaven.”<sup>67</sup>

In the cycle of readings that Mother Church sets before us this year, we are presented with a great gift. For five full weeks our contemplation of God’s love has been nurtured by John’s Bread of Life discourse in the sixth chapter of his Gospel. How many of us have felt the Holy Spirit urging us to spend more time in contemplation before the Eucharist as a result of hearing these words? Has our meditation on these Gospel passages led us to make concrete resolutions to live our Eucharist life more fully? If you have not yet done so, or even if you have, I invite you to slowly and with much reflection read these words from Christ. In so doing, we see the proper connection between Eucharistic contemplation and reading of the Scriptures. We don’t read the Scriptures in the same way we would read a history book; we read them and reflect upon them because it is through them that we encounter the Word of God. “For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord’s Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore, an important form of Eucharistic contemplation is the Liturgy of the Word at Mass and Sacred Scripture in general. In doing so, it recalls an aspect of salvation history and an example from the life of Jesus, thereby adding something that is partly new to our memory of Him. The Word of God illuminates the Eucharist and helps us penetrate the endless depths of the Mystery being celebrated. Therefore, let us make frequent recourse to the contemplation of the Word of God – both present in the Scriptures and present in the Eucharist – so that through contemplation we can learn to abide in this Love of God.

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<sup>67</sup> Fulton Sheen, *These Are the Sacraments*

<sup>68</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 103

## IMITATION OF THE BELOVED

“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”<sup>69</sup> In these words, Saint Paul captures the essence of the transformation that is to take place when we adore Christ in the Eucharist – we are to become like our Beloved. Love always means transformation, and it always leads to imitation of the person loved. Love makes us a different person, and as such, we become more like the person whom we love. Since love always leads to imitation, the key is making the correct choice in whom to give our hearts. Is there anyone more deserving of our love or more worthy of emulation than Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament?

The transformational power of love has already been demonstrated in the Incarnation. Saint John tells us, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”<sup>70</sup> God’s love for us is so great, that He not only *imitated* humanity, He *became* a man. As Saint Athanasius said, “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”<sup>71</sup> Christ already perfectly identifies with humanity; He is like us in all things but sin.<sup>72</sup> What is left is for us is to imitate Him, to be so transformed by our union with Him that it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us.<sup>73</sup>

Through Adoration, we learn to do more than imitate someone who lived two thousand years ago; rather we learn to imitate the Living God Who is present before us in the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus has provided us a model for emulation not only in His life while walking among us, but in His Eucharistic presence. “By reflecting on the virtues which the glorified Savior manifests in the Eucharist, we are inspired to imitate Him now living on earth in the sacrament of His love.”<sup>74</sup> All virtues are present in Him who is the source of all virtue, but the virtues of humility, self-surrender, and selfless love are especially apparent behind the veil of the Sacrament. The Creator of all things, the omnipotent God, not only humbled Himself to become a man, but in the Eucharist He further humbles Himself under the appearance of bread. Furthermore, the Almighty subjects Himself to being consumed by His creation. We must respond with a similar humility. “God loves us; we need only to summon up the humility to allow ourselves to be loved. But we do have to ask ourselves, again and again, whether we are not possessed of the pride of wanting to do it for ourselves; whether we do not rob man, as a creature, along with the Creator-God, of all his dignity and stature by removing all elements of seriousness from the life of man and degrading God to a kind of magician or grandfather, who is unmoved by anything.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ephesians 5:1-2

<sup>70</sup> John 3:16

<sup>71</sup> Saint Athanasius, *De incarnatione*, 54, 3

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Galatians 2:20

<sup>74</sup> Father John Hardon, *Imitating Christ in the Eucharist*

<sup>75</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us – The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 37

Imitation of Christ not only shows the degree of our love for Him, but it is also the primary condition of being His disciples. In addressing the early Christian communities, John attested to this reality when he said, “But whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him.”<sup>76</sup> Through imitation of Christ, our love moves beyond mere words to concrete action. This is what Saint John described as loving in deed and truth.<sup>77</sup> To love God in truth means to imitate the universality of His love. Our love for God must include love of our neighbor. It is through this love of neighbor that we express our love of God. In loving another person, we come to love the things that person loves. In the case of God, we likewise must love what He loves – each and every person that He has created. We respond in love because we have been loved first. For this reason, Saint John exhorts us, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”<sup>78</sup> Pope John Paul II took this even further. When examining the relationship between the love of God expressed in Adoration and the love that we express towards our neighbor, he said, “If our Eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person. The awareness of that dignity becomes the deepest motive of our relationship with our neighbor.”<sup>79</sup>

Our imitation of Christ would naturally fall short if we were limited to our own efforts. When our Lord calls us to perfection<sup>80</sup>, He can do so because He gives us the means to reach it in the Eucharist. When we adore Christ in the Eucharist, He not only gives us an example to follow, but He gives us the graces we need to live out that example. Therefore, Pope Paul VI rightly said, “Not only while the Sacrifice is offered and the Sacrament is received, but as long as the Eucharist is kept in our churches and oratories, Christ is truly the Emmanuel, that is ‘God with us.’ Day and night He is in our midst, He dwells with us, full of grace and truth. He restores morality, nourishes virtues, consoles the afflicted and strengthens the weak.”<sup>81</sup> It is worth reiterating what I have already said many times in this letter: we are the great beneficiaries of Christ’s love when we adore Him in the Eucharist. For this reason, Saint Alphonsus Liguori, a great doctor of the Church said, “Certainly among all devotions, after that of receiving the sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves.”<sup>82</sup>

The more that we spend time with Christ, the more we will come to appreciate this great gift and the more that we will be transformed by Him. Just as our skin is transformed by being in the presence of the sun (even if we don’t recognize it at the time), our souls are transformed by being in the presence of our Lord. “Anyone who approaches this august Sacrament with special devotion, and endeavors to return generous love for Christ’s own infinite love, will experience

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<sup>76</sup> 1 John 2:5

<sup>77</sup> Cf. 1 John 3:18

<sup>78</sup> 1 John 4:11

<sup>79</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 6

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Matthew 5:48

<sup>81</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 67

<sup>82</sup> Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Holy Eucharist*, 116

and fully understand – not without spiritual joy and fruit – how precious is the life hidden with Christ in God, and how great is the value of converse with Christ. For there is nothing more consoling on earth, nothing more efficacious for advancing along the road of holiness.”<sup>83</sup>

Eucharistic Adoration doesn't just transform the individual who kneels before Christ; all of society is transformed by those who have permitted Jesus to change their own lives. We find an excellent example of this in the small town of Ars, as the entire region was transformed by Saint John Vianney's own devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Through his efforts, countless other souls came to know the Love of God manifested in the Eucharist. These and other stories of whole communities and countries being transformed by the power of the Eucharist led Pope Leo XIII to conclude: “History bears witness that the virtues of the Christian life have flourished best wherever and whenever the frequent reception of the Eucharist has most prevailed. And on the other hand it is no less certain that in days when men have ceased to care for this heavenly bread, and have lost their appetite for it, the practice of Christian religion has gradually lost its force and vigour.”<sup>84</sup>

Even in our own times, the examples of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Bishop Fulton Sheen testify to the importance of imitating Christ by living a Eucharistic life.

The heart of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta's message seems to be centered on the Most Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Mother Mary. Her Order experienced such phenomenal success in the work of tending to the poorest of the poor because of its response to the love of Jesus in the Eucharist. Every day, for at least one hour, her sisters adore our Eucharistic Lord exposed on the altar. How did she and her religious sisters endure such great sacrifice daily and consistently in their work with the poorest of the poor, in oftentimes what many would consider inhumane situations? Blessed Mother Teresa's own words give us the answer:

"It is labor; it is not only work – it is hard labor. But we wouldn't be able to do it unless we had Mass and Holy Communion in the morning. I remember when the Prime Minister of Yemen asked for our Sisters to come there. I made only one condition: I can give you the Sisters only if you allow a priest to come. For without Jesus I cannot send them. He accepted. So now after 800 years there is Mass and Holy Communion in Yemen. There is a tabernacle in an area surrounded by Moslems who previously had not a sign of Christianity. Now there is a living God amongst them. I know I wouldn't be able to work one week if it were not for that continual force coming from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

All of us know that unless we believe and can see Jesus in the appearance of bread on the altar, we will not be able to see Him in the distressing disguise of the poor. Therefore these two loves are but one in Jesus" (*Taken from the writings of Blessed Mother Teresa*).

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<sup>83</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 67

<sup>84</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Mirae Caritatis*, 16

The second Eucharistic witness of our time was Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Inspired by the witness of a young Chinese girl who gave her life for love of the Eucharist<sup>85</sup>, he made a promise to make a Holy Hour daily before the Blessed Sacrament after he was ordained. For sixty years of his priesthood, he kept that promise. It was during his Holy Hour that he learned to listen and abandon himself totally to God's call. He always encouraged this practice in others, even non-Catholics. His strong convictions on the benefits of time spent in Eucharistic adoration were a powerful example to religious and laity alike. Of this practice he states:

"I keep up the Holy Hour to grow more and more into His likeness... Looking at the Eucharistic Lord for an hour transforms the heart in a mysterious way as the face of Moses was transformed after his companionship with God on the mountain.

The Holy Hour is not a devotion; it is a sharing in the work of redemption. 'Could you not watch one hour with Me?' Not for an hour of activity did He plead, but for an hour of companionship.

The purpose of the Holy Hour is to encourage a deep personal encounter with Christ. The holy and glorious God is constantly inviting us to come to Him, to hold converse with Him and to ask such things as we need and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him. One of the by-products of the Holy Hour was the sensitiveness to the Eucharistic Presence of Our Divine Lord" (*Treasure in Clay, the Autobiography of Fulton J. Sheen; 1980*).

So intense and intimate was Archbishop Sheen's personal relationship with our Eucharistic Lord that when our Lord was near he would stop in for a visit and use the opportunity to tell Jesus he loved Him! Proof of this was once pointed out by the Archbishop when he explained his love for Jesus. He explained that he had a chapel in his residence and every time he went by the chapel he would stop in for a visit. He said it would have been easy for him to walk by, but that was not the way friends treated each other.

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<sup>85</sup> See page 34- Eucharistic Quotations- for the rest of the story.

## CONCLUSION

As we now go forth to live this Year of the Priest and to commit ourselves to an authentic Eucharist life, we must ask ourselves what concrete action we can do to express this love. “God is waiting for us in Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us not leave him waiting in vain! Let us not, through distraction and lethargy, pass by the greatest and most important thing life offers us.”<sup>86</sup> Spending some time each day in Adoration is not something limited to the clergy; it is something the Church encourages for *all* the faithful. First and foremost, I invite you to consider a weekly holy hour in the *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament* Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Such a practice has been frequently encouraged by the Magisterium. Pius XI urged the faithful to “make expiatory supplications and prayers, prolonged for a whole hour – which is rightly called the ‘Holy Hour.’”<sup>87</sup> Christ’s words to the Apostles apply equally to us: “Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”<sup>88</sup> Those truly in love with Christ will find that an hour a week is never sufficient. When we make Him a priority, there is no reason to think that we can’t spend a little time with Him each day when we are in the vicinity of a church. It doesn’t necessarily have to be an hour each day, but do those in love wait a week before seeing each other again? No; they do anything they can to be in each other’s presence as much as possible. Let us strive to remain in His love by seeking Him in Adoration.

In seeking to remain in His love, let us turn to the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She, who is known under the title Ark of the Covenant, was the world’s first tabernacle. In her body, she held the True Presence of Our Lord. In his beautiful encyclical on the Eucharist, Pope John Paul II stated, “When, at the Visitation, she bore in her womb the Word made flesh, she became in some way a ‘tabernacle’ – the first ‘tabernacle’ in history – in which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed himself to be adored by Elizabeth, radiating his light as it were through the eyes and the voice of Mary.”<sup>89</sup> How many hours must Mary have spent adoring our Lord present inside her womb? In how many ways did she allow our Lord to transform her, always saying, “Let it be done unto me according to your word”?<sup>90</sup> She, whose whole life was devoted to her Son, is the model par excellence of living a Eucharistic life. “Mary can guide us towards this most holy sacrament, because she herself has a profound relationship with it.”<sup>91</sup>

In our relationship with Mary, she is always there to lead us to her Son. She was present at His first miracle, when He changed the water into wine at the wedding in Cana (a foreshadowing of the great miracle of changing bread and wine into His Body and Blood, Soul

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<sup>86</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us – The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 103

<sup>87</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*

<sup>88</sup> Mark 14:37-38

<sup>89</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 55

<sup>90</sup> Luke 1:38

<sup>91</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 53

and Divinity). Just as Mary directed the servants to do whatever He told them<sup>92</sup>, she guides us in the transformation of our lives each time we receive her Son in the Eucharist.

“If the Eucharist is a mystery of faith which so greatly transcends our understanding as to call for sheer abandonment to the word of God, then there can be no one like Mary to act as our support and guide in acquiring this disposition.”<sup>93</sup> Her constant “yes” to God throughout her life meant that she was always ready to contemplate the face of her Son. She who pondered in her heart<sup>94</sup> the love of God (manifest in Jesus’ birth, hidden life, public ministry, death and resurrection), now spends all eternity gazing upon her Son in heaven. Her assumption into heaven demonstrates the path laid out for all of us who love her Son. If we spend our lives in this world contemplating Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, we too will spend all eternity face-to-face with Him. Let us abide in His love both in time and in eternity.

“May the most blessed Virgin Mary, from whom Christ the Lord took the flesh that ‘is contained, offered, received’ in this Sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine, and may all the saints of God and especially those who were more inflamed with ardent devotion toward the divine Eucharist, intercede with the Father of mercies so that this common belief in the Eucharist and devotion to it may give rise among all Christians to a perfect unity of communion that will continue to flourish.”<sup>95</sup>

Mary our Mother and Sts. Patrick and Joan of Arc our Patrons pray for us!

Given in Kokomo, Indiana on August 15, Solemnity of the Assumption, in the year 2009, the Year of the Priest.



Rev. Fr. Ted Deady

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. John 2:5

<sup>93</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 54

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Luke 2:19

<sup>95</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 75

## ADDENDUM I - PRAYERS

# Saint Padre Pio's Prayer After Communion

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have you present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without meaning and hope.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I can hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You ever more, and to be always in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be always faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I wish it to be a place of consolation for You, a dwelling of Your love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late; the days are coming to a close and life is passing. Death, judgment and eternity are drawing near.

It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way, and for that I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need you, my Jesus, in this night of exile!

Stay with me, Jesus, because in the darkness of this life, with all its dangers, I need You.

Help me to recognize You as Your disciples did at the Breaking of the Bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the power which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death I want to be one with You, and if not by Communion, at least by Your grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus. I do not ask for divine consolations because I do not deserve them, but I only ask for the gift of Your Presence. Oh yes! I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for I seek You alone, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and I ask for no other reward but to love You more and more, with a strong and active love.

Grant that I may love You with all my heart while on earth, so that I can continue to love You perfectly throughout all eternity, dear Jesus.

Amen!

*Used with the permission of the Capuchin Order of Friars Minor*

# An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

*From Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, "The Holy Eucharist"*

# An Act of Love

O Lord, God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die. Amen.

## ADDENDUM II

# How to Make a Holy Hour

## A Tried-and-True “15 Minutes” Approach

### **Wonder: The First Fifteen Minutes**

The first suggestion is to mentally divide the Holy Hour into four 15 minute periods. It is essential to take time to visualize the purpose of each period. Be still until you have made that particular purpose clear in your mind.

Then in the first fifteen minutes begin to realize who is really present in the consecrated Host. Meditate until a response of wonder arises (“Is it possible?”, “How can that be?” and yet, “It is true!”) and admiration (“How wonderful: Jesus is really, truly present here”).

Think of the marvel of this great reality. Christ, the God-Man, is truly present in his divinity as well as his humanity; the substance of the bread and wine has been changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The awesome God, *Mysterium tremendum*, is now *Mysterium fascinans*, accessible, beckoning, we are irresistibly drawn.

Think of how the Eucharistic presence differs from the presence of the spirit of God in the world, or residing in us by grace through Baptism, or in the Church as it prays together, or in the words of the Holy Scriptures, as wonderful as these are. This is a unique “substantial” presence. The Second Vatican Council calls it a presence “par excellence”: the Incarnation is here in the flesh.

Consider who Jesus is as God: our Creator, our Redeemer, our Savior-Brother, our Lord and King. Send out your thoughts to search the meaning of these truths. Let your spirit rest in the wonder of his loving presence before you. Be quiet and listen – God wants to speak to your heart.

If words of admiration do not come easily, use the words of familiar prayers or songs of praise found in most church missalettes. For example, choose, “Down in Adoration Falling,” “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name,” the “Holy, Holy, Holy” of the Mass, “Now Praise We All Our God,” or any Benediction hymn. However, rely initially on interior inspiration – do not move too quickly to these texts.

These words should be read slowly, deeply and always in relation to the Christ present before you in the tabernacle or the monstrance. Do not hurry, thinking you have to finish all or any of these hymns and prayers. Remember that Christ himself said, “Do not prattle on...in sheer multiplication of words” (Mt 6:7). Be sure the words express the promptings of your own heart.

### **Thanksgiving: The Second Fifteen Minutes**

A suggestion for the second fifteen minutes is to devote the time to thoughts and prayers of thanksgiving. God is with us!

Momentarily give fresh thought to this fact. Now let words of thanksgiving rise up from your soul, or just simply thank God for His presence here in such a remarkable way. Thank Him for the great Sacrament of the Priesthood and for priestly vocations by which He perpetuates His presence in the Holy Eucharist.

In a parallel situation, think of our Blessed Mother’s joy when she realized that Christ, the promised Messiah, was present within her, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Make her words of the *Magnificat* your own: “The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name” (Lk 1:49). There, hidden in a human womb; here, hidden under the appearance of bread. Or shout with Simeon that exclamation of delight when he realized whom he was holding in his arms: “Now, Lord, you may dismiss your servant in peace...for my eyes have held your salvation” (Lk 2:29, 30). Or rejoice at the words of Zachariah. No longer

speechless, he proclaimed with gusto the wondrous birth of his son John, the “prophet of the Most High,” who would prepare the way for the coming of the Way (Lk 1:76).

You might also take some time to recall and thank God for more personal wonders: your family, your vocation, the gift of life, special friends—and even special crosses. Do you really believe that God loves you particularly in the trials he sends your way? Think and pray until heartfelt conviction comes.

### **Petition: The Third Fifteen Minutes**

The next fifteen minutes dedicate to petition. Ask Jesus in the Holy Eucharist for the grace that is dearest to Him, the grace He wants most for you.

Then think of the great blessing of redemption and eternal salvation. To be in heaven for all eternity! Pray for it, beg for it, for your friends, family, for the entire world, for yourself. Salvation is the fulfillment of Christ’s greatest intention and the main reason for His coming—and for His Eucharistic presence before you. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (Jn 6:54).

Pray for conversions. Pray for particular people by name, perhaps those who are away from the Church. Pray for the sick and lonely, the discouraged, the unborn, for our country and its leaders. Pray for our Holy Father and for all priests and religious that they will be effective instruments in doing the work of God. Pray for new vocations. Pray for your own continual conversion. Pray for the grace to know the will of God and to do it. Pray for peace, God’s peace, in the hearts of all.

### **Atonement: The Last Fifteen Minutes**

Dedicate the final fifteen minutes of the Holy Hour to atonement. Why atonement? Glance at today’s headlines. Read of the carnage and atrocities of war. Read of the escalating number of abortions per year, 1.6 million and counting in the United States alone. Read about the secularization of our culture and its often hostile attitude toward religious faith of any creed. Examine a recent poll showing that over 70% of Catholics no longer understand (dare we say believe?) in the Church’s constant teaching on the Real Presence in the Eucharist. Read and shudder.

Think of the vulgarity of television and its prime time attacks on the natural innocence of children. Is it no wonder that the perpetual virginity and Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother—dogmas of the Father—are subtly slurred, no longer taken seriously? Think of the atonement required for the general disregard of inspired Church teaching, especially, and most painfully, from those in the education and ministerial vocations. Think, and you will find many reasons to beg for God’s pardon.

Look into your own conscience; perhaps there too you will find the answer to the question, “Why atonement?”

You might wish to express your sorrow by saying the Act of Contrition or the liturgical prayers, “Lord, have mercy,” the “Lamb of God,” or “O Lord I am not worthy.” In the Litany of the Sacred Heart we find powerful and inspirational motives for praying for Divine Mercy. The Litany of our Blessed Mother is very appropriate, asking under her many titles to “pray for all of us.” Recite the St. Michael prayer for protection against demonic influence. Renew your Marian consecration, asking Mary to wrap you and your family within her protective mantle.

A thoughtful saying of the Rosary would be helpful during any phase of a Holy Hour. With Christ before you in the Holy Eucharist, consider the salvific events in his life that the Rosary portrays. Ponder them in your heart as you ask the Blessed Mother to intercede for you and for the world, “now and at the hour of our death.”

*From the Conventual Franciscan Friars, Marytown*

## **ADDENDUM III – Eucharistic Quotations**

### **Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen**

#### **Why Archbishop Sheen Made A Daily Holy Hour:**

Bishop Sheen responded that it was not a Pope, a cardinal, another bishop, or even a priest or a nun. It was a little Chinese girl of eleven years of age. He explained that when the Communists took over China, they imprisoned a priest in his own rectory near the Church. After they locked him up in his own house, the priest was horrified to look out of his window and see the Communists proceed into the Church, where they went into the sanctuary and broke into the tabernacle. In an act of hateful desecration, they took the ciborium and threw it on the floor with all of the Sacred Hosts spilling out. The priest knew exactly how many Hosts were in the ciborium: thirty-two.

When the Communists left, they either did not notice, or didn't pay any attention to a small girl praying in the back of the Church who saw everything that had happened. That night the little girl came back. Slipping past the guard at the priest's house, she went inside the Church. There she made a holy hour of prayer, an act of love to make up for the act of hatred. After her holy hour she went into the sanctuary, knelt down, bent over and with her tongue received Jesus in Holy Communion (since it was not permissible for laymen to touch the Sacred Host with their hands.)

The little girl continued to come back each night to make her holy hour and receive Jesus in Holy Communion on her tongue. On the thirty-second night, after she had consumed the last and thirty-second host, she accidentally made a noise and woke the guard who was sleeping. He ran after her, caught her, and beat her to death with the butt of his rifle. This act of heroic martyrdom was witnessed by the priest as he watched grief-stricken from his bedroom window.

When Bishop Sheen heard the story he was so inspired that he promised God he would make a holy hour of prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament every day of his life. If this frail little child could give testimony and witness to the world concerning the real and wonderful Presence of her Savior in the Blessed Sacrament, then the Bishop was absolutely bound by all that was right and true, to do the same. His sole desire from then on was to bring the world to the burning Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The little girl showed the Bishop what true courage and zeal really is, how faith could overcome all fear, and how true love for Jesus in the Eucharist must transcend life itself. What is hidden in the Sacred Host is the glory of His love. The sun in the sky is symbolic of the Son of God in the Blessed Sacrament. This is why most monstrosities are in the form of a sunburst. As the sun is the natural source of all energy, the Blessed Sacrament is the supernatural source of all grace and love. The Blessed Sacrament is JESUS, the Light of the world.

- ❖ "Neither theological knowledge nor social action alone is enough to keep us in love with Christ unless both are preceded by a personal encounter with Him. Theological insights are gained not only from between two covers of a book, but from two bent knees before

an altar. The Holy Hour becomes like an oxygen tank to revive the breath of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the foul and fetid atmosphere of the world."

- ❖ "The holy hour in our modern rat race is necessary for authentic prayer. Our world is one of speed in which intensity of movement is a substitute for lack of purpose; where noise is invoked to drown out the whisperings of conscience; where talk, talk, talk gives the impression that we are doing something when really we are not; where activity kills self-knowledge won by contemplation...There seems to be so little in common between our involvement with the news of the world and the Stranger in whose Presence we find ourselves. The hour means giving up a golf game or a cocktail party, or a nap...Sometimes it is hard, especially during vacation when we have nothing to do. I remember once having two hours between trains in Paris. I went to the Church of Saint Roch to make my holy hour. There are not ten days a year I can sleep in the daytime – this was one. I was so tired, I sat down at 2:00p.m.--too tired to kneel--and went to sleep. I slept perfectly until 3:00p.m. I said to the Good Lord: 'Did I make a holy hour?' The answer came back: 'Yes! That's the way the Apostles made their first one.' The best time to make a holy hour is in the morning, early, before the day sets traps for us. By being faithful to it, and letting nothing interfere with it, we use it as the sign and symbol of our victimhood. We are not called to great penances, and many would interfere with our duty, but the hour is our daily sacrifice in union with Christ."

### **Saint Augustine**

- ❖ "Christ held Himself in His hands when He gave His Body to His disciples saying: 'This is My Body.' No one partakes of this Flesh before he has adored it."
- ❖ "We do not sin when we adore Christ in the Eucharist; we do sin when we do not adore Christ in the Eucharist."
- ❖ "God in his omnipotence could not give more, in His wisdom He knew not how to give more, in His riches He had not more to give, than the Eucharist."
- ❖ Of Jesus, St. Augustine says, "Look upon the beauty of your Lover."

### **Saint Dominic Savio (died at age 15)**

- ❖ "I need nothing in this world in order to be happy. I only need to see Jesus in heaven, Whom I now see and adore on the altar with the eyes of faith."

## **St. John Vianney, Cure d'Ars**

- ❖ "All the good works in the world are not equal to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass because they are the works of men; but the Mass is the work of God. Martyrdom is nothing in comparison for it is but the sacrifice of man to God; but the Mass is the sacrifice of God for man."
- ❖ "When we speak to Jesus with simplicity and with all our heart, He does like a mother who holds her child's head with her hands and covers it with kisses and caresses."
- ❖ "If we really loved the good God, we should make it our joy and happiness to come and spend a few moments to adore Him, and ask Him for the grace of forgiveness; and we should regard those moments as the happiest of our lives."
- ❖ "Without the Holy Eucharist there would be no happiness in this world; life would be insupportable. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive our joy and our happiness. The good God, wishing to give Himself to us in the Sacrament of His Love, gave us a vast and great desire, which He alone can satisfy. In the presence of this beautiful Sacrament, we are like a person dying of thirst by the side of a river — he would only need to bend his head; like a person still remaining poor, close to a great treasure — he need only stretch out his hand. He who communicates loses himself in God like a drop of water in the ocean. They can no more be separated."
- ❖ "The soul hungers for God, and nothing but God can satiate it. Therefore He came to dwell on earth and assumed a Body in order that this Body might become the Food of our souls."
- ❖ "What happiness do we not feel in the Presence of God, when we are alone at His feet... Redouble your fervor; you are alone to adore your God; His eyes rest upon you alone."
- ❖ "The many wonders of creation can only fill us with astonishment and admiration. But when we speak of the most holy Eucharist we can say that here is to be found the miracle of divine love for us.... Has there been, or will there ever be, a nobler or more magnanimous love than that which He has shown us in the sacrament of love?"
- ❖ "What does Jesus Christ do in the Eucharist? It is God who, as our Savior, offers himself each day for us to his Father's justice. If you are in difficulties and sorrows, he will comfort and relieve you. If you are sick, he will either cure you or give you strength to suffer so as to merit Heaven. If the devil, the world, and the flesh are making war upon you, he will give you the weapons with which to fight, to resist, and to win victory. If you are poor, he will enrich you with all sorts of riches for time and eternity. Let us open the door of his sacred and adorable Heart, and be wrapped about for an instant by the flames of his love, and we shall see what a God who loves us can do. O my God, who shall be able to comprehend?"

## **John J. Cardinal Carberry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, 1957-1965**

- ❖ "Jesus, my God, I adore You, here present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, where You wait day and night to be our comfort while we await Your unveiled presence in heaven."
- ❖ "Christ Jesus! True God and man, of one substance, majesty and power with the Father, with firm faith I believe and confess that You are truly and really present in this sacrament. For You who are the Truth itself, have said, 'This is my body.'"
- ❖ "I love You, O Christ Jesus, because You, in Your exceeding love for me, have come in the flesh, and have loved me even to death; and in the Blessed Sacrament have given me Yourself for a pledge of this love. I love You more than myself and than all things; at least, I most earnestly desire so to love You, and always to adhere to You alone. Oh, that by the force of this sacrament there may be cemented between You and me a union of love so great, that nothing may be able to separate me from the love of Christ my Savior."

## **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

- ❖ "The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven, and will help bring about an everlasting peace on earth."
- ❖ "The Eucharist is connected with the Passion. If Jesus had not established the Eucharist we would have forgotten the crucifixion. It would have faded into the past and we would have forgotten that Jesus loved us. There is a saying that to be far away from the eyes is to be far away from the heart. To make sure that we do not forget, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as a memorial of his love ... When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then, when you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now."
- ❖ "Put your sins in the chalice for the precious blood to wash away. One drop is capable of washing away the sins of the world."
- ❖ "Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration with exposition needs a great push. People ask me: 'What will convert America and save the world?' My answer is prayer. What we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in holy hours of prayer."
- ❖ "When the Sisters are exhausted, up to their eyes in work; when all seems to go awry, they spend an hour in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. This practice has never failed to bear fruit: they experience peace and strength."

- ❖ "Perpetual Adoration, Eucharistic Adoration offers to our people the opportunity to join those in religious life to pray for the salvation of the world, souls everywhere and peace on earth. We cannot underestimate the power of prayer and the difference it will make in our world."
- ❖ "Like Mary, let us be full of zeal to go in haste to give Jesus to others. She was full of grace when, at the Annunciation, she received Jesus. Like her, we too become full of grace every time we receive Holy Communion. It is the same Jesus whom she received and whom we receive at Mass. As soon as we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, let us go in haste to give Him to our sisters, to our poor, to the sick, to the dying, to the lepers, to the unwanted, and the unloved. By this we make Jesus present in the world today."
- ❖ "We cannot separate our lives from the Eucharist; the moment we do, something breaks. People ask, 'Where do the sisters get the joy and the energy to do what they are doing?' The Eucharist involves more than just receiving; it also involves satisfying the hunger of Christ. He says, 'Come to Me.' He is hungry for souls."
- ❖ "If you are looking for vocations, as a community have adoration every day. Once the Missionaries of Charity started daily adoration, their vocations doubled."

## **Pope John Paul II**

- ❖ "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist." - Opening sentence of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II's encyclical on the Eucharist
- ❖ "I encourage Christians regularly to visit Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, for we are all called to abide in the presence of God."
- ❖ "I hope that your example attracts many souls to the adoration of Jesus Christ who is present on the altar to be of comfort and hope to those who confide in him with faith and love; they look on him as the Emmanuel, God with us, who wished to dwell amongst us: his heart in our heart."
- ❖ "The Eucharist is not only a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church's life, but also in a sense its fountainhead. The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church: 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor 10:17, RSV). Because of this vital link with the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the mystery of the Church is savored, proclaimed, and lived supremely in the Eucharist." *Dies Domini*, Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 1998
- ❖ "In the Mass and in Eucharistic Adoration we meet the merciful love of God that passes through the Heart of Jesus Christ."

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