



THE PASTOR'S DESK

March 7, 2010 - Eucharistic Adoration

Dear Parishioners,

As I have been discussing Pope John Paul II's last encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, we find that that Holy Father touches on a topic very close to us here at St. John Neumann: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Last week, I wrote about Transubstantiation, the Church's teaching that the bread and wine cease being bread and wine and become, each entirely, the Body and Blood of Christ. While the "accidents", the sensible qualities of bread and wine remain, they become symbolic, since they continue to show the presence of bread and wine, a presence which has ceased at the moment of consecration. This change is also permanent. Once changed, the sacred species never go back to being bread and wine. Until they cease to exist by being consumed and digested by the priest or communicant, they remain the Body and Blood of Christ.

As the understanding of this belief broadened in the Church, the practice of looking upon the sacred species in adoration grew. There developed a moment in the Mass where the Blessed Sacrament and the chalice were shown to the people. Over time, the practice arose of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This hour of prayer became an answer to Our Lord's question to the apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane "Can you not stay awake with me for one hour." This hour also took that moment in Mass where the Blessed Sacrament was shown to the people and stretched it out for an hour.

Out of this, then, arose the practice of Perpetual Adoration, where the Blessed Sacrament is visible all day and all night with someone always there in prayer and adoration. We are very blessed to have this practice here at St. John Neumann. This a great source of grace for all of us.

Pope John Paul II had this to say about adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in his encyclical:

The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass – a presence which lasts as long as the species of bread and of wine remain—derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual. It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.

It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the Beloved Disciple (cf. Jn 13:25) and to feel the infinite love present in his heart. If in our time Christians must be distinguished above all by the "art of prayer", how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament?

How often, dear brother and sisters, have I experienced this, and drawn from it strength, consolation and support!

This practice, repeatedly praised and recommended by the Magisterium, is supported by the example of many saints. Particularly outstanding in this regard was Saint Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote: 'Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us'. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure: by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. A Christian community desirous of contemplating the face of Christ in the spirit which I proposed in the Apostolic Letters Novo Millennio Ineunte and Rosarium Virginis Mariae cannot fail also to develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship, which prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord.

'In the course of the day the faithful should not omit visiting the Blessed Sacrament, which in accordance with liturgical law must be reserved in churches with great reverence in a prominent place. Such visits are a sign of gratitude, an expression of love and an acknowledgment of the Lord's presence': Paul VI, Encyclical Letter Mysterium Fidei (3 September 1965).

As we announced last week, we are in constant need of people who volunteer to be adorers at particular times. The Blessed Sacrament is never to be exposed without someone to adore. If you can volunteer to take an hour each week, you can help to keep Perpetual Adoration going here at St. John's and you can grow in your love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. But, most of all, you can help keep open that outpouring of grace that gives so many blessings to our parish. There is information outside of the Adoration Chapel on how to sign-up for a particular hour. Even if you cannot commit yourself to a particular time, you can be a substitute for those times when regular adorers are sick or on vacation.

During this Lent, take some time to visit the Blessed Sacrament. This very simple practice can change your life.

**God bless,
Fr. LaHood**

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**Morning of Recollection
Wednesday, March 17th
10 am to 12:00 noon**

Fr. William will be giving a presentation on the theme: "St. Philip Neri - The Apostle of Joy. Why we need him during Lent". The morning will include Mass, rosary and time for confessions. The event is open to all, sponsored by the Fifty Plus Club.