

ADORATION



Talk presented by Deacon Tom
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Unfortunately, a video and sound recording from this talk is not available. However, the slides are very thorough and they speak for themselves.

ADORATION



Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the
Lord our Maker.

When we speak of Adoration – there are several types:

- It all begins with the Mass – our first and primary act of Adoration
- Public Adoration outside of Mass – Blessed Sacrament exposed
- Public/Private Adoration – Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle
- Private Adoration – which can be as simple as reading and meditating on scripture
- Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday

To adore God is to acknowledge in respect and absolute submission, the “nothingness of the creature” who would not exist but for God.

To adore God is to praise and exalt Him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in her Magnificat, confessing that He has done great things and holy is His name.

Since we are composed of a twofold nature: soul and body we offer God a twofold adoration:

- Spiritual adoration – consisting of the internal devotion of the mind
- Bodily adoration – an exterior humbling of the body by such acts as prostration, genuflecting, kneeling or bowing in the presence of our God.

Be still and know that I am God.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Mathew 6:6)

Adoration must begin with awakening our spirit

- Block out the noise of our everyday lives
- Centering myself on God
- Adore God in all love and humility
- Bend my will to God's will
- Faith – Hope – Love

We see this in the Gospel of Luke 18: 9-14

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you; this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exulted.





Padre Pio celebrated the Mass interiorly

Mass would last over 2 hours

Go into ecstasy during the Consecration

Imagine the Mass lasting over an hour. The host elevated for 10 minutes at the consecration.

Imagine going to place deep within yourself – a place where you can connect with God and your truest self!

The only way we can do that is in SILENCE!

Whether you are the priest, deacon, lector, acolyte, cantor, musician, usher or sitting in the pew – before Mass and during Mass we need to enter the silence of our hearts.

The liturgy must be celebrated with moments of sacred silence – if not the priest says the Mass – instead of praying the Mass! And the rest of us are worshipping in the same manner!



After Communion Pope John Paul II would kneel down to pray, close his eyes and go to a place deep within himself, nothing could distract him from communing with God.

After Mass we need that same sacred silence to give thanksgiving for what we have received in Holy Communion.

Time to ponder the great mystery we have just celebrated.

To ponder “God is with us” – God is within us.

I usually don’t have the time to do that until 30 minutes – sometimes an hour after Mass.

“Go in peace – glorifying the Lord by your life” – boom – Mass is over – the mass exodus begins – and the “social” aspects of our gathering begins – or we just run out the door – business as usual – back into the noise of the world.

How can I possibly be transformed by Christ if that is the norm? We can’t.

All we have discussed so far from the spiritual dimension of our act of Adoration apply not only to the Mass but also our devotions outside of Mass that we will get to later.

But what about our bodily dimension.

St Thomas Aquinas notes:

The outward act expresses the humility of the creature. Exterior adoration is offered on account of interior (or spiritual) adoration.

We see many references in Sacred Scripture of these outward acts of adoration.

We read in Scripture:

2 Chronicles 7:3: The sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, **bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground**, and they worshiped and gave praise to the Lord.

2 Chronicles 29:29: Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him **bowed down and worshiped**.

Isaiah 45:23: “I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, That to Me **every knee will bow**, every tongue will swear allegiance.

Romans 14:11: For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, **every knee shall bow to Me**, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

Matthew 27:29: And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and **they knelt down before Him** and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Mark 10:17: As He was setting out on a journey, **a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him**, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Matthew 9:18: While He was saying these things to them, a **synagogue official came and bowed down before Him**, and said, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.”

Luke 22:41: And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and **He knelt down** and began to pray.

Matt. 26:39: Jesus, agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane before His torture and death, **"fell on His face and prayed"**.



In the Latin Mass we see these outward acts of adoration.

Throughout the entire Mass in the *rubrics* (mandatory actions by the celebrant) we observe:

- Frequent genuflections
- Shallow bows
- Deep bows
- Signs of the cross
- After the consecration – thumb and first finger held together
- At the Our Father the priest is looking at the Sacred Host

And so we see these reverent acts of adoration by the priest – and by observing his actions – we were naturally drawn into our own acts of adoration.

The priest celebrated *ad orientum* – leading us in prayer and adoration during Mass.

In Novus Ordo – these actions have been greatly curtailed.

The priest now faces the people – he is now the center of attention.

In many churches kneelers have been removed.

Many will sit in chairs - so they don't have to kneel.

When we pray or worse yet when we come forward for Communion our hands are not folded – our arms are crossed – hands in pockets – or at our sides.

Many intimidated by the actions of others – are embarrassed to reflect in their physical actions - what their inner spirit is encouraging them to do.

Personal experiences: St Mark/St Michaels

It may well be that kneeling is alien to modern culture – insofar as it is a culture, for this culture has turned away from the faith and no longer knows the One before who kneeling is the right, indeed the intrinsically necessary gesture. The man who learns to believe - learns also to kneel, and a faith or a liturgy no longer familiar with kneeling - would be sick at the core. *Cardinal Ratzinger*

Simply put our outward actions matter! We are how we pray!

No matter which Mass we celebrate – the Eucharist is still the Eucharist! We must never forget that.

But in the end – the graces available to us at Mass are dependent on our own disposition.

And our disposition is a factor of our spiritual and our physical adoration.

The driving factor in any case is our own personal spiritual adoration – and our physical adoration will be a reflection of our spirit.

Perhaps our biggest problem with adoration is our own apathy. We are not as passionate about God as we should be.

St Paul exhorts the Colossians, “**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth**”.

Colossians 3:2

In doing so, he calls them to continually carry with them the distinction between the trivial and the meaningful, and to set their minds on the latter. The problem with making everything important is that everything might become equally important. It becomes increasingly difficult to feel the grandeur of something that really is a big deal.

And so maybe we miss the grandeur that is present at the Mass or anytime we go into God’s presence!

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth”.

In the sacristy in a church in Avila is a large wooden crucifix surrounded by the following words: “Priest of Jesus Christ, celebrate this Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass – your last Mass – your only Mass.”

Imagine you could only participate in Mass one more time before meeting God for the Final Judgment.

How would you prepare? What would you wear? What intentions would you bring to that Mass? Who would you be praying for knowing you wouldn't see them again in this lifetime?

Reflect on that Perhaps it will remove some of the apathy we have when it comes to attending Mass or simply coming by church for whatever reason.

“Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel” (which means, “God with us”). *Matthew 1:23*

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the world.” *Matthew 28:20*

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either hot or cold. As it is, since you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.” *Revelation 3:15-16*

“Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy.” *Matthew 5:48*

The sanctuary lamp burning next to the tabernacle in every catholic church in the world reminds us that God is indeed always present and available.

Perhaps it is time to reevaluate how we view our weekly Mass.

What if we view it not as “my weekly obligation – but rather my weekly act of love of God”.

And it follows – if I really love someone – than I naturally want to spend more time with them – I give them all of my attention when I am with them.

My “weekly act of love of God” will then result in perhaps daily Mass when I can - or other acts of adoration during the week.

Adoration outside of Mass

Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Mysterium fidei*: The faithful should not omit making visits during the day to the Most Holy Sacrament, as a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, and a debt of the adoration due to Christ the Lord who is present in it.”

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: “For the contemplation of Jesus present in the Most Holy Sacrament, as a communion of desire, powerfully joins the faithful to Christ, as is splendidly evident in the example of so many saints.”

In Canon Law: “Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, a church in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved should be open to the faithful for at least some hours each day, so that they can spend time in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament.”

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” *Matthew 11: 28-30*

Most of us are weary and burdened – sometimes just overwhelmed with all the tasks during the week. Do this – do that – what should I do – what is my priority for today?

Couple that with social media – the TV or the radio blaring in the background – our lives are constant “noise”. We are just plain tired.

Somewhere in all of this noise – we have to “go to that inner room” and find **silence – find God – and find rest.**

We find that silence – that Holy Moment – at adoration outside of Mass.

Public adoration with the Blessed Sacrament exposed is a beautiful ritual with singing, communal prayers, incense and time spent in silence.

Private adoration in the church is just you and Jesus in the tabernacle – and is available whenever the church is open.

In either case – it is a time where you can reflect on your life and recenter the priorities in your life.

This is the time – **in the silence of your heart and soul** – to open yourself to God – and to determine what ***His will*** is for you – in all the circumstances in your life.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane,* and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,* and began to feel sorrow and distress.

Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death.* Remain here and keep watch with me.”

He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”

When he returned to his disciples, he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “**So you could not keep watch with me for one hour?**” *Matthew 26:36-40*

As He said to Peter – you could not watch with me for one hour? – so our Lord also says to us.

One hour – and not just one hour at Mass during the *week* – *but one hour each day of our lives*.

“Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. **The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” *Matthew 26:41*

With our disordered priorities – our ***busy lives*** – so too our flesh is weak!

- I’m playing pickleball, going fishing, shopping
- I have to clean house – cut the grass
- I’m doing this – or I have to do that

Or the worst excuse just as it is sometimes with Mass:

I don’t get anything out of it!

In all of our “noise” – we can’t sit in silence and pray from our hearts: **“Speak Lord, your servant is listening”**. *1 Samuel 3:10*

“We all must take the time to be silent in the presence of our Lord – for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is the friend of silence – we need to listen to God because it’s not what we say but what He says to us and through us that matters. Prayer feeds the soul – as blood is to the body, prayer is to the soul – and it brings you closer to God. It also gives you a clean and pure heart. A clean heart can see God, can speak to God, and see the love of God in others. When you have a clean heart - it means you are open and honest with God, you are not hiding anything from Him, and this lets Him take what He wants from you”.

St Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Throughout the history of the Church – all of the saints (as well as those holy men and women who have been raised to sainthood officially) – have spent at least an hour a day before the Blessed Sacrament – or in private prayer if the Blessed Sacrament wasn't available.

And why? Their strength was in God and specifically in the Eucharist.

Mother Teresa was emphatic that her sisters and brothers spent an hour before the Blessed Sacrament so they had “Christ within them” as they went out into the streets of Calcutta – so they could see the “face of Christ” in each person they met.

I can't imagine the cross they bore each day in their lives. They were able to carry it because Christ was with them.

Later in life Mother Teresa had a calling card made which reads as follows:

The fruit of silence is

Prayer

The fruit of prayer is

Faith

The fruit of faith is

Love

The fruit of love is

Service

The fruit of service is

Peace

So much wisdom for each one of us in just a few simple words.

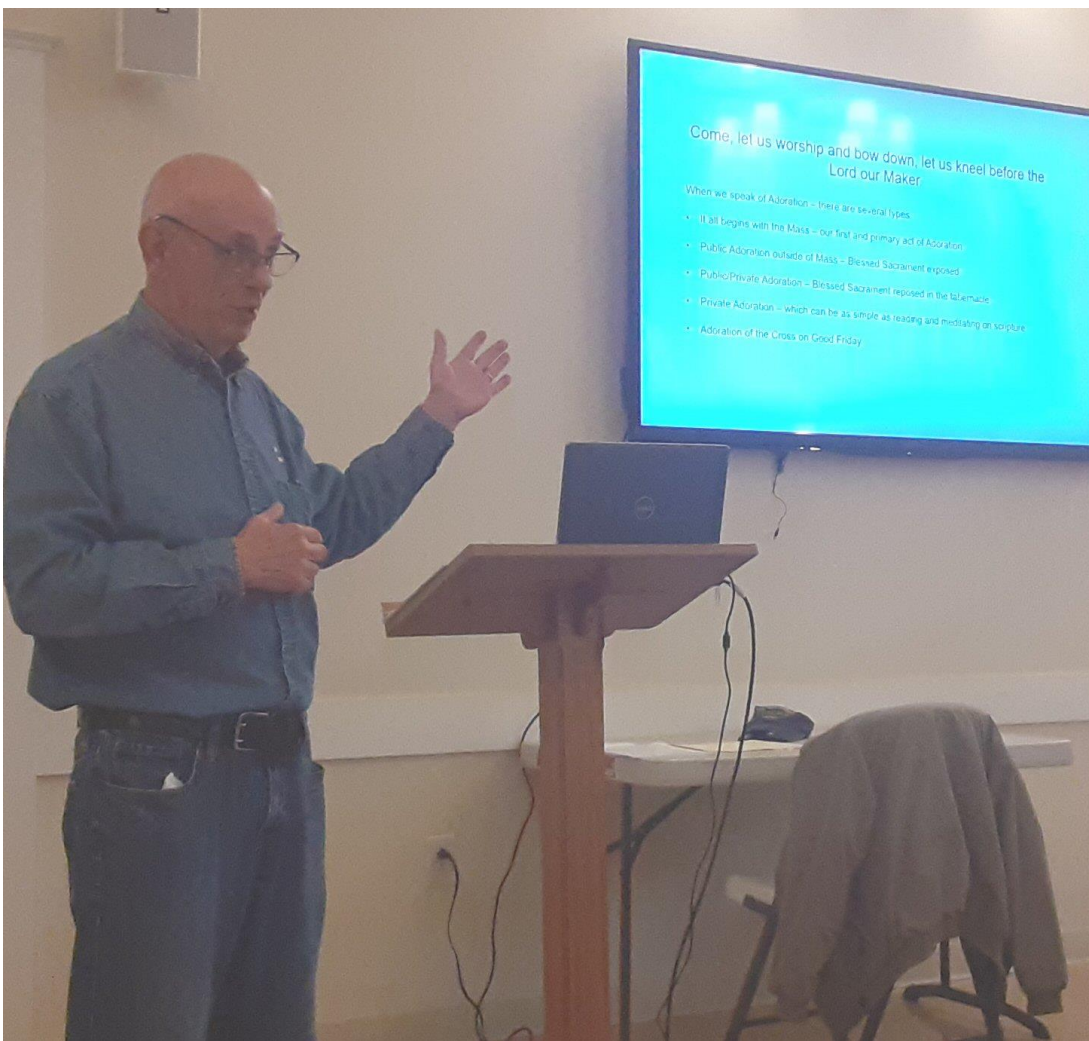
When the church is open – we all have the opportunity to visit Jesus in the tabernacle.

He is always there – waiting for a visit.

Whether you are praying in thanksgiving (which we generally tend to forget), for someone who is sick or dying, for guidance in my marriage, for a better job to make ends meet – whatever is wearing us down – He is there to help us carry the crosses He gives us in our life.

Maybe I don't have an hour to give – but what about 15 minutes – 10 minutes – 2 minutes to just stop by and say Hi!

Whenever you come to church for whatever reason – getting a Mass card – a meeting – a social event: at least stop in and acknowledge that God is truly present!



Finally – if you cannot get up to church everyday – at least have a Holy Moment – an hour with the Lord. For example:

- Pray the rosary on the porch or while driving
- A prayer corner in your home where you can read and meditate on scripture
- Do morning or evening prayer or read the daily readings and reflect on them (***I Breviary*** is an **excellent app you can download to your phone.**
- Visit or call a parishioner or friend who is homebound or in the hospital or rehab.
- Helping someone you come across on the street who just needs your help.

These are all simple things – but done out of love for God – they are prayers – for praying is nothing other than **love in action.**