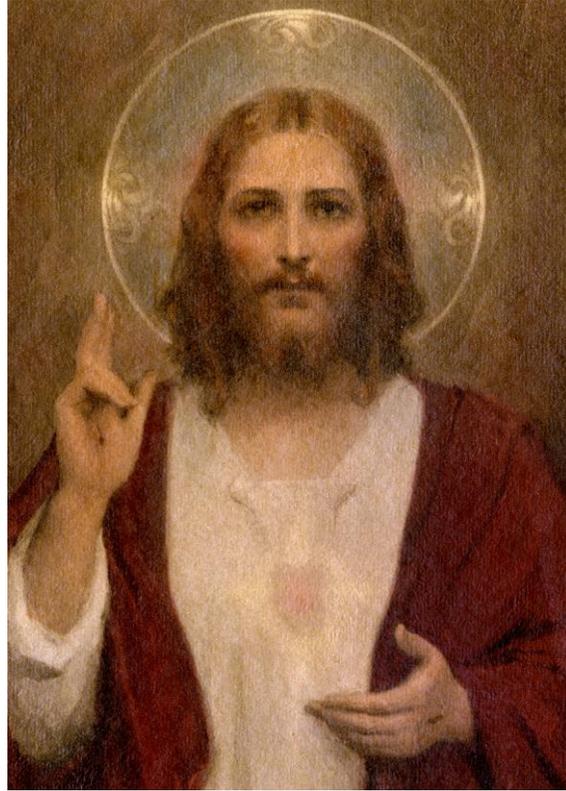


DEVELOPING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS



WHEN YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW SOMEONE WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU DO? You spend more time with them, often conversing with them. You become closer to someone by sharing your feelings, thoughts, hopes and aspirations for the future and listening to them. When one person loves another, they want to be with this person whom they love. This is true for whatever type of relationship one may think of. A mother and her new born infant, a father and his child, two friends, sweethearts, husband and wife. Love seeks to be with the object of its love. This helps us understand the great mystery of our faith. If you want to develop a personal relationship with Jesus you have to make an effort just as you would in your interaction with others.

JESUS WANTS TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND. He is the one friend that will always be there for you. He always loves you and wants what is best for you. He will never abandon you or reject you. When you offend Him you only have to turn back to Him and He forgives you. He loves you still even when you have hurt

Him. He can be closer to you than your best friend if you want Him to. He is considerate; he will never force you to be with Him. How close you want the relationship to be is up to you. You have to spend time with Him in prayer, listening and just being with Him. What better way to accomplish this than within adoration of the Blessed Sacrament... Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, body, blood, soul and divinity. That is why it is called the Real Presence.

WHAT A WONDERFUL THING, TO BE ABLE TO BE WITH GOD, IN HIS PRESENCE, WHILE STILL HERE ON EARTH... This is the means He has given us to draw closer to Him. Just sitting in His Presence, absorbing His love for you and listening does wonders for your soul. Spending time in His Eucharistic Presence will enable you to grow in holiness. Many people also report being healed of emotional and physical ailments while spending time in His Presence.

BECAUSE JESUS' WHOLE LIFE IS A MYSTERY TO US, WE NEED EUCHARISTIC ADORATION TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THIS MYSTERY. The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith and wanted to share it with others. They could see and make others see the traces of Christ's mystery in all His earthly life. Everything in Jesus' life was a sign of His mystery. His deeds, miracles, and words all revealed that in Him the fullness of divinity dwells bodily. His humanity appeared as a Sacrament that is, the sign and instrument of His divinity and of the salvation He brings. What was visible in His earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission. Christ's whole life is a mystery of redemption. Redemption comes to us all through the blood of His cross. But this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life. All Christ's riches are for every individual, and, are everyone's property. Christ did not live His life for Himself but for us, for our salvation and for our justification. Jesus brings into the presence of the Father on our behalf all that He lived and suffered for us. He is always our advocate before the Father.

THE EUCHARIST IS THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. For in the Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself. The Eucharist is the efficacious sign, sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the people of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship humanity offers to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith. Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking. The species reserved in the tabernacle is called the Blessed Sacrament. The most Blessed Sacrament is the sacrament of sacraments. The Most Blessed Sacrament of The Eucharist incorporates the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the whole Christ is truly, really,

and substantially contained. It is Christ's real presence because it is His presence in the fullest sense. It is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes Himself wholly and entirely present. Eucharistic Adoration is the worship given to Jesus Christ while He is present in the consecrated species of bread. This consecrated bread which is the Eucharist can be contained in a closed tabernacle or placed in a vessel called a monstrance where He can be openly viewed by all.

AS YOU COME TO WORSHIP JESUS IN EUCHARISTIC ADORATION YOU PLACE YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, AND THE WORLD YOU LIVE IN WITHIN THE REAL PRESENCE OF GOD. We all know that if we place ourselves in the presence of the sun, it gives us a glow. When the rays of the sun touch us they change the appearance of our skin, they even penetrate our being. Though we can't see these rays they still exist and our skin can attest to it. The Eucharistic species also emanates rays, divine rays which bring conversions, grace, healing and holiness into your life and into the lives of others. These rays penetrate to the very core of your being which is your soul. There Jesus who is mystery will perform some of His greatest miracles. He will reveal Himself to you in a most special and personal way. He will lift for you the veil of mystery surrounding Him in the way and manner He desires to do so just for you. Can you even begin to fathom the graces and blessings waiting for you there? (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #515, #517, #519, #1324, #1325, #1327, #1330, #1336, #1374.)

RECEIVING GRACES FROM EUCHARISTIC ADORATION: The type of grace received in adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is called 'actual grace'. Actual grace is given for a particular purpose or situation. All grace is oriented toward eternal life but actual grace is given to us by God to help us grow in virtue. Through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, God may give you the grace to overcome a certain temptation or to be more patient and loving with others. He knows the graces you are most in need of to be made more into His image. Scripture says "And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Cor 3: 18)

IN PARA. 67 OF MYSTERIUM FIDEI, POPE PAUL VI SAID OF CHRIST PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST: He raises the level of morals, fosters virtue, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the weak and stirs up all those who draw near to Him to imitate Him, so that they may learn from His example to be meek and humble of heart, and to seek not their own interest but those of God. Anyone who has a special devotion to the sacred Eucharist and who tries to repay Christ's infinite love for us with an eager and unselfish love of his own, will experience and fully understand-and this will bring great delight and benefit to his soul-just how precious is a life hidden with Christ in God and just how worthwhile it is to carry on a conversation with Christ, for there is nothing

more consoling here on earth, nothing more efficacious for progress along the paths of holiness.

POPE PAUL VI GOES ON TO SAY IN PARA. 69: "Hence it is that devotion to the divine Eucharist that exerts a great influence upon the soul in the direction of fostering a "social" love, in which we put the common good ahead of private good, take up the cause of the community, the parish, the universal Church, and extend our charity to the whole world because we know that there are members of Christ everywhere." Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into the body (1 Cor 12: 12-13). If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored all rejoice together (1Cor 12: 26). The graces we receive in adoration affect the whole body. We may also pray for others and their needs and also ask God to give us the graces necessary for us to minister to others. In para. 2024 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it exhorts us to pray for others while in front of the Blessed Sacrament, asking our Our Lord to grant them graces.

MANY SAINTS SPENT HOURS IN FRONT OF JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. Mother Teresa's Order, The Missionaries of Charity, spend daily hours of adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament to give them strength for their work and for growth in holiness. St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, in his book "The Holy Eucharist," (Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn, NY), attributes his hearing the call of a vocation to time spent in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Almost any saint, whose life you may read, will tell of the graces received while in front of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Only a God of great mystery would allow you to find Him, love Him, and make Him your own.

THERE IS NO GREATER MYSTERY THAN THE LOVE OF GOD WHO SENT US HIS ONLY SON TO LIVE AND DIE SO THAT WE WOULD BE SAVED FROM A LIFE OF SIN AND SLAVERY. Jesus promised that He would not leave us orphaned. He is still here today waiting for you and me in His silent, loving, and mysterious presence in The Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist and the Cross are stumbling blocks for some. They both are the same mystery and this never ceases to be an occasion of division. "Do you want to leave Me too?" (John 6: 67) The Lord's question echoes throughout the ages as a loving invitation to discover that only He has the words of eternal life. To receive the gift of His Eucharistic Presence is to receive the Lord Himself. When we know this which of us can refuse?