

WHAT AM I SUPPOSE TO DO DURING EUCHARISTIC ADORATION?

This is a question that has often been asked of me and it deserves some very serious consideration. It is a question that seeks the answer to another question; "How do I pray?" Jesus thought it was so important that he addressed the issue with his disciples in Luke 11, "He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray."



I would like to take some time to outline some hints about prayer and how one could possibly pray while spending time with the Holy Eucharist. In our parish we have a 24/7 Eucharistic Chapel and this can be our quiet time with our Eucharistic Lord yet, it is easy to become restless because we are so accustomed to "doing things." This quiet is a time for us to simply be with the Lord and love Him by giving Him our precious time for being in His presence. Yes, it does sound so simple, perhaps too simple! It is not unlike a couple having their "couch time" at the end of the day. At 8:30pm work is done, the dishes are well into the drying cycle, the kids are in bed, it is simply time to be together in an embrace where words are not necessary. One could almost say that Eucharistic Adoration is "couch (pew) time" with Jesus. Some pass time in Adoration by simply being silent and saying the name of Jesus to refocus between distractions. Some may pray silently and some may pray the Jesus prayer. The later is one of my favorites.

The Jesus Prayer is a mantra phrase which has its origins in the early Eastern Church. As one breathes in, one silently says, "Jesus Christ Son of God." You are breathing in Christ with all His glory. He is literally the air you breathe. As one exhales, one silently says the second part of the prayer, "Have mercy on me." One can do this while eyes are closed or fixated on the Eucharist. I have also found this prayer to be a wonderful form of meditation in airports, calming in time of stress, and effective when the "right" words for prayer seem to escape me.

Reading scripture is also a great way to pray during Eucharistic Adoration. Ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch you and come alive in your heart. Then read a passage being attentive to words that may "strike you." Don't read to "knock off" another chapter of the Bible. Read to let God touch you through His Sacred Word.

The Rosary is yet another form of prayer that may be used in Eucharistic Adoration. "How to" pamphlets are available in the gathering space of the Church. Praying the Our Father's and Hail Mary's can be a marvelous way to meditate on the mysteries of Christ that the Rosary contains. If one truly prays and meditates on the mysteries and avoids "machine gun" style reciting, it could take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes to pray 5 mysteries.

Spiritual Reading is another form of prayer that may truly minister to us during Eucharistic Adoration. While reading Scripture fits into this category of prayer, this includes the writing of the saints, or spiritual writers that offer teaching, meditation and insight into the persons of the Trinity, the Church, and Christian living.

It is inevitable that when we speak of prayer, we must address the issue of DISTRACTIONS in prayer! Thomas Merton wrote, "If you have never had any distractions you don't know how to pray." The phrase means that distractions are inevitable. To struggle with distractions is to know the difference between prayer and day dreaming. It is the difference between spending time with one you love as opposed to being physically present to someone while really being miles away. As we are willing to work through distractions and struggle with them, we enter into the work of prayer; the submission of my mind, heart, soul and strength to my lover Jesus. Indeed, if you come to Eucharistic Adoration and feel as if you were distracted the entire time, consider this; "Even trying to pray is prayer!" (Fr. Moe) Come to Eucharistic Adoration and check out these marvelous prayer toys! Hone your skills in these and use them liberally at home, work, on vacation, at the office or any place you would like to have an encounter with the Holy Trinity, our Most High God.

While there have been thousands of books written on the subject of prayer there are some basic principles will spark your prayer life. Much of my material will be rooted in a wonderful book that is no longer published, Appointment With God, Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R (Franciscan University Press). It is one of the best books I have seen for outlining and forming a life of prayer. If you can find a copy via the internet it will make a great resource for your spiritual life of prayer.

....Fr. Moe