



PRESENTED TO

Name

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Personal Note



A YEAR
WITH THE
EUCCHARIST





A YEAR WITH THE EUCCHARIST

DAILY MEDITATIONS
ON THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

PAUL JEROME KELLER, OP



CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

DEDICATION

*To our Lord Jesus Christ in thanksgiving
for the gift of the Most Holy Eucharist*

Nihil Obstat: Rev. Allen Moran, OP
Censor Deputatus

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Foreword



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Pope St. John Paul II wrote, is “an important daily practice” and an “inexhaustible source of holiness.”

Like many priests, I encourage Catholics everywhere to make Eucharistic adoration a part of their daily lives. I encourage parents, young people, religious brothers and sisters, and priests to kneel before the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, to encounter him in silence, and to be transformed by the dynamic exchange of love between the heart of Jesus and their own heart. I know the power of Eucharistic adoration from my own experience, and I know that Pope St. John Paul II was right when he said that adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a powerful and “inexhaustible” source of holiness. Jesus Christ, really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist, is the answer to every question that plagues our hearts, every doubt we experience, every trouble or trial we face.

I am encouraged by the growing interest in the practice of adoration before Christ in the Eucharist. It seems that more and more parishes across the country are instituting some form of Eucharistic Adoration on a regular basis. This is a clear sign that in this age of noise in which we live, people are longing to spend more quiet time with the Lord in prayer.

Unfortunately, few people today, even devout and dedicated Catholics, have learned how to really pray. There was a time when children learned to pray in their family homes, and with their parents, but today few people know what it is they should do, or say, or think when they kneel before the Blessed Sacrament. And the frenetic pace of our distracted culture makes contemplation, or even prayerful reflection, ever more difficult.

Most of us, at the same time we begin to make Eucharistic adoration a part of our lives, need help knowing what it is we should do before Christ in the Eucharist. As we decide to make prayer an important part of our lives, we need help knowing how to pray. And none of us should be discouraged by that—even the disciples of Jesus asked him directly, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

A Year with the Eucharist aims to do just that, to teach us how to pray. Father Paul Keller has gathered meditations and reflections from holy men

and women, and asked questions for reflection and contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament. *A Year with the Eucharist* can be used as a guide for Eucharistic adoration and its meditations the launching point to deeper intimacy with Christ in the Eucharist.

I encourage *A Year with the Eucharist* for anyone who prays before the Blessed Sacrament, for those who might encounter the book in an adoration chapel on their very first visit, and for those who have been praying before the Eucharist for years. Its meditations, like the Eucharist itself, can be an inexhaustible source of grace for us, as they encourage us to enter into dialogue with the Lord, to experience his presence, and to be made holy by the transforming power of his love.

Bishop James D. Conley
Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska

Introduction



No one has ever desired anything more than God desires to draw us into union with himself. That sage perception of an eminent scholar of theology has been the guiding principle for much of my own theological reflection, teaching, and preaching through the years. This pithy axiom is essentially a summary of the whole of the narrative of the Bible, from the first words of Genesis to the closing line of Revelation.

It is on account of God's desire for us to share in his divine life that the Son of God became incarnate of the Virgin Mary for us, endured his passion and death for us, and instituted the sacraments, again, for us. So much has he desired to remain with us so that we might share in his life here and now, and especially for eternity, that he instituted the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist on the night before he died. This is no mere spiritual presence. The Holy Eucharist is, as Christ himself has said, his own Body and Blood. Only the kind of love that knows no bounds would have Christ insist that we eat his Body and drink his Blood, now resurrected and ascended to the right hand of the Father. When we partake of the sacrament of his Body and Blood we also receive his divinity and his human soul within our very beings. What kind of God is this that not only redeems sinners from eternal death but commands them to feed on him such that they become what they consume?

Man is divinized by his participation in the life of the Blessed Trinity, and the Eucharist is the continued nourishing of our divine life. This participation, by God's own plan (because of the kind of nature he has created man to have), is not some mere subjective claim or wish or distant hope. Man, who is not only a soul but an embodied soul, has been given by Christ himself the sacraments of salvation, which minister divine grace to the soul through the medium of bodily sensible signs. The Eucharist stands at the center of the sevenfold sacramental system as the unique and abiding sign of God's desire for us to share in his life. Nothing could be more objectively real than Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist at the Sacrifice of the Mass through the ministry of those men Christ has chosen as his priests.

It is a privilege to offer you the fruits of my work of collecting these

Eucharistic meditations drawn from so many sources. You will find here a table replete with just a year's worth of pondering and praying about the Holy Eucharist from Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, saints, devout Catholics, poets, and even hymnals. Don't be fooled, though; these pages contain only a smattering of the great treasury of writings on this supreme sacrament. One could spend a lifetime reading, studying, and praying about the Holy Eucharist alone.

Having been created to share in the very life of God, the Holy Eucharist is the beacon by which we find our way through the mists that sometimes shroud our eyes from the glory that awaits us. The mists may take the form of struggles with sin, illnesses, or even the imposed sufferings resulting from the free will of other human beings. Through it all, Christ stands in his full radiant and sacramental presence before us; he is present in the tabernacles and on the altar at Mass in our Catholic churches. He will never abandon us. He will not stop being with us, even until the end of the world. May we simply give our humble assent to the divine plan.

May these daily meditations be for you a deepening of your knowledge and experience of the truth of Christ's Eucharistic love. May you be drawn deeply, and reside in, his Eucharistic heart.

Holy Thursday, 2018
Cincinnati, Ohio

How to Use this Book



This book is meant to help you to ponder the depths of Christ's Eucharistic presence. It is best used during your time of prayer, whether at home or some other suitable place such as a church or chapel. I would like to encourage you to take it with you to Mass, either as a preparation for the Holy Eucharist or to aid you in making your thanksgiving after Mass. Or use it at a time of Eucharistic adoration, whether before the tabernacle or during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Each day's meditation is numbered, not dated. This makes it easy for anyone to begin these meditations and prayers on any given day of any year. While a daily use of this book is ideal, the reader who misses a day (or more) can easily pick up where he/she left off.

Prayer is an essential feature of each day of our lives. Prayers said on the fly may be helpful, but to truly grow in union with God, we do best in having a special time of communicating with and listening to God. This involves finding the time and place when and where we habitually pray. Prayer is simply communicating with God. For those who are beginners, the most important thing is to begin. It's okay to start small . . . say with 5–10 minutes of time with God. You will find yourself gradually increasing the time you give to prayer.

As the saints teach us, it is always best to invoke the Holy Spirit. Something as simple as, "Come, Holy Spirit, and help me to pray," is enough. God will always do his part, for he desires to draw us into union with himself. After this, spend a short time listing various gifts and graces that God has given you and thank him for each one. After becoming interiorly quiet, turn to this book. Look at the daily title. Read the short introduction, which is a point of reference for the quotation that follows. The short introduction is just one of several possible points of reference, so if after reading the quote you find yourself thinking of another aspect of the Eucharist, stay with it. Think about what the quotation offers and how it fits your life. The questions (or sometimes, statements) after the quotation are meant to help you ponder the meaning of the text and its application to your life personally. Lastly, you will find a closing prayer. This prayer is only a beginning, so feel free to add on to it, especially giving thanks to God for the insights he has

given you through this reading and pondering.

Know and believe that God desires to draw you into greater intimacy with himself. If you ask Christ for the grace of deeper communion, of deeper love of the Eucharist, of deeper intimacy in Eucharistic prayer, he will most assuredly answer your prayer. Be bold in your request. Jesus tells us to ask and it will be given, to seek and it will be found, to knock and it will be opened. It is just to prayers such as these that our Father will give even more to those who ask him (Mt 7:7–12)!

Grant, my Lord and God, that I may grow in faith and love for you, that I may experience ever more deeply the union of divine friendship that you desire for me, that I may know and glorify you and the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in preparation for that day when you call me to abide in heaven with you and the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the angels and saints. Amen. So be it! Come, Lord Jesus!

Acknowledgments



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I have sought to present a work without error to be truly helpful to my readers. For anything less, I apologize in advance and take sole responsibility.