

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration spreads throughout the world

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When asked "What will save the world?", Mother Teresa replied: "My answer is prayer. What we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in holy hours of prayer."

Over 2,500 parishes around the world now have Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. About 500 of these are in the Philippines with Cardinal Sin asking every parish in the Archdiocese of Manila to have perpetual adoration. The United States has about 1,100 chapels of perpetual adoration, the Republic of Ireland about 150 - and Bishop John McGee of Clonane Diocese, the only man to be secretary to three Popes, has personally established 33 of these chapels. South Korea, with its rapidly growing Catholic population, has 70.

In any situation in our world, our best reaction is to give our lives wholeheartedly to Christ, through prayer and penance. Prayer should especially be in the presence of Jesus Himself - in the most Blessed Sacrament.

That is the foundation of the worldwide movement for Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration.

At the height of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI wrote a prophetic encyclical titled *Mysterium Fidei*. In the encyclical, the Pope states that the Eucharist is reserved in our Church as the "spiritual centre" of the parish. Hence: "Anyone, therefore, who approaches this august Sacrament with special devotion and endeavours to return generous love for Christ's own infinite love, experiences and fully understands ... how great is the value of converse with Christ, for there is nothing more consoling on earth, nothing more efficacious for advancing along the road to holiness."

Pope Paul said he wrote this encyclical "so the hope aroused by the Council that a new era of Eucharistic piety pervade the whole Church be not frustrated." He pleaded with pastors and bishops to "tirelessly" promote devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Pope John Paul II, in his letter *On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist* (1980), wrote: "The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic adoration. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of His love." The Holy Father put his words into action by beginning perpetual adoration, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, on 2 December 1981. Since then, there has been uninterrupted, continuous adoration in the little chapel at St Peter's in the Vatican. In the prayer to

open this chapel, the Pope prayed for every parish in the world to have perpetual adoration.

Advantage

In the 1940s, a priest in the US started perpetual adoration in his parish to pray for the safety of the men in the parish who had gone to war; not one of these men was killed. As a result, a neighbouring parish which had already lost 20 men in the war decided to start perpetual adoration; afterwards not one man died.

San Marcus parish, Guatemala, has perpetual adoration, and not a single priest or parishioner was harmed during the recent civil war there. In the four surrounding parishes, priests were killed and villages wiped out.

Since that fateful day of 11 September 2001, the Society for Perpetual Adoration in the US has been almost inundated with requests from priests and laity for perpetual adoration in their parishes.

There are only 168 hours in a week. The vast majority of parishes have two, three or four times more people than there are hours in the week. The practical advantage of perpetual adoration is that it opens up all 168 hours of the week. This makes it very easy for anyone to choose one of the hours during the week to make a holy-hour of prayer.

When each hour is covered it also makes the Blessed Sacrament available to anyone at any time. When people know that they have an opportunity to visit Our Blessed Lord any time they desire, it is extraordinary how many people respond.

The purpose of this article is to appeal to those priests and laity who "know" the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and want to proclaim Him "Lord of Lords and King of Kings" through perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. What I do is speak at all weekend Masses on the value and spiritual benefits of spending a quiet, personal, holy hour of prayer in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

After the homily each person is given an invitation. Those wanting to participate in perpetual adoration by spending an hour a week give their telephone number. The invitation includes a request for a committee to help organise all the hours so that each hour is covered and Jesus is never left alone. A meeting of these people is held in the parish, to teach them how to organise perpetual adoration, in a smooth, effective way that will last for years to come.

If there are vacant hours, these hours are advertised and committee members approach people to volunteer. Also, a smaller parish may combine with another. Because of the faith of the laity and the hunger for prayer, enough people

almost always make themselves available for perpetual adoration.

Some think it is dangerous to make adoration in the middle of the night.

Never once that I know of has anyone been harmed while either coming to or going from Eucharistic adoration. Sacre Coeur in Paris has had perpetual adoration for over 100 years without a single incident. St Joseph's parish (Bakersfield, California) has perpetual adoration. Since it was established, the parish priest has been astonished by the total lack of vandalism and crime, as it is a very rough area.

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