

Encountering the Eucharist

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Wherever the Eucharist is reserved, a “Sanctuary Lamp” should be burning. This is a wax candle, generally in a red glass container and is kept burning day and night wherever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in Catholic churches or chapels. It is an emblem of Christ’s abiding love and a reminder to the faithful to respond with loving adoration in return. In Judaism, the sanctuary lamp is known by its Hebrew name, *Ner Tamid* (Hebrew: “eternal flame”). Hanging or standing in front of the “ark” in every Jewish synagogue where the sacred scrolls are kept. It also symbolizes God’s eternal presence and is therefore never extinguished. In a sense, the Sanctuary Lamp can be likened to the “beating heart” of every church.

What We Believe... Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

During the month of February our thoughts usually turn to expressions of love and other amorous acts of affection such as giving or receiving Valentine’s Day cards, bouquets of roses, and boxes of chocolate candy. Whatever one’s opinion about Valentine’s Day, each of us look for affirmation, acceptance, and affection from others. It’s simply part of our human nature. Those are legitimate human needs that we desire. But have we ever thought about the fact that Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ also desires to receive affirmation, acceptance and expressions of loving affection? This might sound slightly odd, that Jesus would *need* or *desire* any-



Second Person of the Trinity He assumed a *fully* human nature and confusion, mixture, division, words, when the Son of God possessed the divine nature, each nature retained its own attributes. Neither did not become human nor did not become divine. Neither were the natures mixed together such that Christ was a strange human-divine hybrid, neither truly human nor truly divine. No, Christ was and remains the God-man. Therefore, in His human nature, Jesus also looks to receive affirmation, acceptance, and affection from us. But how often do we actually give Him these expressions of love? Don’t we often come to Him and ask Jesus to *give us* something? How often are we even conscious of His presence? Unfortunately, at best Jesus is maybe taken for granted or, at worst, utterly ignored. During the month of February we see lots of heart shapes to symbolize human love. As far back as the ancient Greek philosophers, it was agreed that the heart was linked to our strongest emotions, including love. Curiously, whenever there has been a validated Eucharistic miracle where the host has turned into actual flesh, the subsequent scientific investigations of the substance have usually all concluded that the structure of the transformed fragment of the host was identical to the myocardial (heart) tissue of a living person who is nearing death. Thus, in the Eucharist, Jesus is *giving us* His heart! In other words, Jesus is trying to show His affirmation, acceptance, and affection towards us, His bride! Unfortunately, His gestures are more often met with unrequited love. Jesus has strong intimate feelings toward us but often we do not feel the same way. When this happens between persons, there arises feelings of profound sadness, disappointment, and frustration accompanied by a sense of rejection. As Christ has a fully human nature, there is a way in which He still suffers when His divine love is not returned. It might be worth considering that, as we are being more intentional offering tokens of love to each other this month, perhaps we might also offer an act of love to our Lord Jesus Christ too. “Jesus, I desire to comfort, unite and offer myself in union with Thee.”

Sharing Our Very Life: Eucharistic Adoration



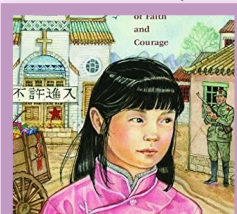
“You should adore our Lord Jesus Christ, who makes Himself present to us on the altar, so that we might offer Him the homage and adoration we owe. Your most loving Heart, O Jesus, dwells in this Sacrament burning with love for us. It is there continually performing thousands of good deeds towards us.”

-St. John Eudes

One traditional Catholic devotion that seems to be coming back is Eucharistic Adoration. When Catholics say they are “going to Adoration,” they are typically referring to Eucharistic Adoration. Which, in the most basic terms, is the worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass. The Eucharistic Host is displayed in a monstrance on the altar so that all can see and pray in the presence of Christ. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that, “Adoration is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the ‘King of Glory,’ respectful silence in the presence of the “ever greater” God. Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications” (CCC #2628). We can show our adoration to God in many ways, but in Eucharistic Adoration, we spend time adoring the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Mother Theresa says, “The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven, and will help bring about an everlasting peace on earth.” Perhaps spending some time in adoration this month would be the perfect way to give back to Our Lord the affirmation, acceptance, and affection that He always shows us every day.

Life in the Eucharist: Little Li: Child Martyr of the Eucharist

The little Catholic girl has been given a name—Li—but we don’t know if that was really her name. Her age is usually given as 10 or 11, but we don’t really know about that, either. We know she lived in the twentieth century, and there is a strong likelihood that it was the mid-twentieth century, right after Mao Zedong completed his communist takeover of China. Government



troops invaded her parish church and imprisoned the parish priest. Then the soldiers broke into the tabernacle, took the ciborium because it was made of gold, and scattered the Hosts on the floor in an act of desecration. After nightfall, Li slipped back into the church and observed a Holy Hour in front of the Hosts scattered on the

church floor. After she finished the devotion, she carefully bent down and consumed just a single one of the Hosts with her tongue. Li patiently returned to the church night after night to observe her Holy Hour and consume another precious piece of the Body of Christ. There were 32 Hosts on the floor. On the very last night, she was caught by a soldier guarding the church and killed. The imprisoned priest watched all this from his window.

Adoro te Devote: Feast of The Eucharistic Heart of Jesus

On 9 November 1921, Pope Benedict XV instituted the feast of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus to be celebrated on the Thursday within the Octave of the Sacred Heart. In instituting the feast, Pope Benedict XV wrote: “The chief reason of this feast is to commemorate the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the mystery of the Eucharist. By this means the Church wishes more and more to excite the faithful to approach this sacred mystery with confidence, and to inflame their hearts with that divine charity which consumed the Sacred Heart of Jesus when, in His infinite love, He instituted the Most Holy Eucharist, wherein the Divine Heart guards and loves them by living with them, as they live and abide in Him. For in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist He offers and gives Himself to us as victim, companion, nourishment, viaticum, and pledge of our future glory.” Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, gracious companion of our exile, I adore Thee. I will keep silent in order to listen to Thee.

