

ISSUE 16

October 2023

PERPETUAL
EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



Greetings. Welcome to the second newsletter of 2023. I hope and pray that you have had a blessed and peaceful year so far. It is great that spring has arrived.

2023 has been a big year with the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Adoration Chapel held on June 30th. Nearly 200 gathered for Mass and Adoration with Bishop Michael Gielen at St Gregory's. The next night a celebration dinner was held. Fr Allan Jones and Bishop Michael spoke beautifully about Perpetual Adoration and what a blessing it is to this Diocese. He thanked all those who had been a part of it over the last 10 years.

In this newsletter:

Trusting Prayer: Soul of the Apostolate

Silence and Solitude

What is Liturgy?

We still have a number of gaps in our roster, especially over night. Last year I wrote an article about why people would be crazy enough to get up at night and pray. Check it out at <https://perpetualadoration.chchcatholic.nz/2022/06/praying-in-the-middle-of-the-night-why/>

Thank you to everyone for your continued dedication. God Bless you all.

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Indeed, it is not those who do great things based on the excellence of their human qualities who are holy; on the contrary, holy people are those who humbly let Christ penetrate their soul and act through them, who truly allow him to play the lead in all their actions and aspirations, inspiring every project and sustaining every silence.

Pope Benedict XVI

TRUSTING PRAYER: THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE

A letter from Pope Benedict XVI on the 450th anniversary of the opening of St Teresa of Avila's first monastery.

1. Resplendens stella: "a star shining in great splendour". With these words the Lord encouraged St Teresa of Jesús to found the Monastery of San José in Avila. This was the beginning of the Reform of Carmel. I would like to join in the rejoicing of the beloved Diocese of Avila, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites and of the People of God on pilgrimage in Spain, as well as of all those in the universal Church who have found in Teresian spirituality a sure light for men and women to attain a true renewal of their life through Christ. In love with the Lord, this illustrious woman did not want anything other than to please him in all things. **Indeed, it is not those who do great things based on the excellence of their human qualities who are holy; on the contrary, holy people are those who humbly let Christ penetrate their soul and act through them, who truly allow him to play the lead in all their actions and aspirations, inspiring every project and sustaining every silence.**

2. Only those who have an intense prayer life are able to let Christ lead them in this manner. The Saint of Avila says that a life of prayer consists in "being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with him who, we know, loves us". The reform of Carmel was born from prayer and is inclined to prayer. By distancing herself from the Mitigated Rule in order to further a radical return to the primitive Rule, St Teresa de Jesús wished to encourage a form of life that would favour the personal encounter with the Lord, for which "we have only to find a place where we can be alone and look upon him present within us. Nor need we feel strange in the presence of so kind a Guest". The Monastery of San José came into being precisely in order that all its daughters might have the best possible conditions for speaking to God and establishing a profound and intimate relationship with him.

3. St Teresa proposed a new way of being a Carmelite in a world that was also new. The "times were dangerous" and in these times, as this spiritual teacher said, **"the friends of God should be strong, in order that they may support the weak"**. And she eloquently insists: "the world is on fire. Men try to condemn Christ once again, as it were, for they bring a thousand false witnesses against him. They would raze his Church to the ground.... No, my sisters, this is no time to treat with God for things of little importance". Does not this most luminous and challenging reflection made by the holy mystic more than four centuries ago seem familiar to us in the situation in which we are living?



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The ultimate aim of the Teresian Reform and of the creation of new monasteries in the midst of a world devoid of spiritual values was to strengthen apostolic work with prayer; and to propose an evangelical lifestyle that might serve as a model to those in quest of a way of perfection, **based on the conviction that every authentic personal and ecclesial reform passes through reproducing, ever more faithfully, the "form" of Christ** (cf. Gal 4:19) **within us**. The Saint and her daughters strove to do exactly this and this was the exact commitment of her Carmelite sons who endeavored solely to "advance in virtue". In this regard Teresa writes: **"He [Our Lord] prizes one soul which of his mercy we have gained for him by our prayer and labour more than all the service we may render him"**. In the face of forgetfulness of God the Holy Doctor encourages prayerful communities that protect with their fervor those who proclaim Christ's name everywhere, so that they may pray for the Church's needs and bring the cry of all the peoples to the Saviour's heart.

4. Today too, as in the 16th century and also among rapid changes, **trusting prayer must be the soul of the apostolate so that the redemptive message of Jesus Christ rings out with deep clarity and vigorous dynamism**. It is urgently necessary that the Word of life be harmoniously vibrant in souls, with resonant and attractive tones.

Teresa of Avila's example is a great help to us in this exciting task. We can say that in her time the Saint evangelized without mincing her words, with unflinching ardour, with methods foreign to inertia and with expressions haloed with light. Her example keeps all its freshness at the crossroads of our time. **It is here that we feel the urgent need for the baptized to renew their hearts through personal prayer which, in accordance with the dictates of the Mystic of Avila, is also centred on contemplation of the Most Holy Humanity of Christ as the only way on which to find God's glory**. Thus they will be able to form authentic families which discover in the Gospel the fire of their hearths; lively and united Christian communities, cemented on Christ as their corner-stone and which thirst after a life of generous and brotherly service. It should also be hoped that ceaseless prayer will foster priority attention to the vocations ministry, emphasizing in particular the beauty of the consecrated life which, as a treasure of the Church and an outpouring of graces, must be duly accompanied in both its active and contemplative dimensions. **The power of Christ will likewise lead to the multiplication of projects to enable the People of God to recover its strength in the only possible way: by making room within us for the sentiments of the Lord Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5), seeking in every circumstance a radical experience of his Gospel**. This means, first of all, allowing the Holy Spirit to make us friends of the Teacher and to conform us to him.

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It also means accepting his mandates in all things and adopting such criteria as humility in behaviour, the renunciation of the superfluous and giving no offence to others or proceeding with simplicity and a docile heart. **Those who surround us will thus perceive the joy that is born from our adherence to the Lord and see that we put nothing before his love, being ever ready to account for our hope** (cf. 1 Pet 3:15) and, like Teresa of Jesus, living in filial obedience to our Holy Mother, the Church.

5. This most illustrious daughter of the Diocese of Avila invites us to this radicalism and faithfulness. Accepting her beautiful legacy at this moment in history, the Pope asks **all the members of this particular Church, and especially youth, to take seriously the common vocation to holiness**. Following in the footsteps of Teresa of Jesus, allow me to say to all who have their future before them: may you too, aspire to belong totally to Jesus, only to Jesus and always to Jesus. **Do not be afraid to say to Our Lord, as she did, "I am yours; I was born for you, what do you want to do with me?"**. And I ask him to obtain that you may also be able to respond to his call, illuminated by divine grace with "determined resolve" in order to offer "that little" which is in you, trusting in the fact that God never abandons those who leave everything for his glory.

6. St Teresa knew how to honour with deep devotion the Most Holy Virgin, whom she invoked with the sweet name of Carmel. I place under her motherly protection the apostolic aspiration of the Church of Avila so that rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit she may find appropriate ways for proclaiming the Gospel with enthusiasm and courage. May Mary, Star of Evangelization, and her chaste spouse, St Joseph, intercede so that this "star" which the Lord set alight in the universe of the Church with the Teresian Reform, may continue to shine with the great splendour of the love and truth of Christ for all humankind.



SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Article

By Fr. Dan Westermann

A few years ago, my friend made his final vows in New York City. I flew out early to spend time with another priest friend. We wandered around Times Square and other popular sites. I found myself drawn into the rush and almost overwhelmed by the chaos of the city. Everybody moves fast. We dodged folks and tried to get places as quickly as possible. There were bright lights, car horns, and other noises. I found myself hating it. At one point, we were walking on the sidewalk; people were rushing, cutting people off, and trying to move as efficiently as possible. We approached a woman with a stroller at an intersection, and initially, I was inclined to push past her. Thanks be to God, I caught myself and realized how crazy I was acting. I stopped, smiled at the woman, and let her go first. She reluctantly smiled back; I think she was confused and wondering, "Why is this person letting me go first?"

Later, my friend took me to St Patrick's Cathedral. I sat down in Adoration and finally took a deep breath and relaxed. **I thought about how fast-paced and desperately in need of the Lord our culture is.**

After my friend's final vows, a big group of priests and religious stood on the street in New York City. It was phenomenal to witness with these people that there's more to life than hustle and bustle and chaos. **We desperately need silence and solitude. We cannot flourish as disciples without times of silence and solitude throughout our days.** Scripture highlights this:

- Elijah, who had been fiercely defending the Lord, ran in fear after killing the prophets of Baal. As he prayed on Mount Horeb, he heard different loud noises, but God spoke in the still, small voice.
- At the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel likely came to Mary while she was in prayer, in silence and solitude.
- Jesus often went to the wilderness to spend time alone with the Father. Jesus wasn't annoyed with his disciples or frustrated with being around so many people. He was demonstrating how to find intimacy with the Father.

Solitude is a privileged place of encounter with the Father. In silence, I must confront the broken places in my heart—places I'm not proud of. As we become aware of those places, we can bring them to the Lord. It's like being at the ocean, where waves prevent us from seeing the deeper reality beneath the surface. The Lord wants us to live out of the deep places; to do that, we must get past the choppiness on the surface. **When we step away from the noise of this world, we can encounter the Lord in a deep place in our hearts.** This truth is reflected in a beautiful story about St. John Vianney—the patron saint of priests, who brought renewal to his parish. He kept noticing an elderly parishioner sitting in the church and finally asked what he was doing all day. The man responded, "I look at Him, and He looks at me."

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Article

This illustrates what we're **invited to in silence: to gaze upon Jesus and allow Him to look at us.** Jesus Himself spends time in prayer with the Father before making big decisions like calling the apostles. **We are all called to be on mission, and for fruitful and effective ministry, we must live out of a deep place of intimacy with the Lord.**

Another example comes from my time in seminary in Rome. One of my priest formators made his retreats at a Carthusian monastery. The Carthusians have never needed renewal; their rule of life is so strict, they've never had to revisit anything. They spend most of their days in silence. They can talk one day a week. When one of the Carthusian monks was being transferred to a different monastery, which rarely happens, a group of us seminarians got to spend time with him. He was incredibly normal, very calm, collected, and peaceful. I said, "Father, you spend most of your days in silence. What does your prayer life look like?" He answered, "Prayer becomes more and more simple."

As he shared this, I thought of the story of St. John Vianney. This Carthusian monk continued, "As I enter into prayer, I pull up a chair, and I sit and behold the gaze between the Father and the Son." He said when the Father looks at Jesus on the cross, He sees all of humanity with an intense love and fierce passion. You could spend a lifetime praying with this image of the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. This is what we're drawn into as Christians. This is who the Holy Spirit is—the love between the Father and the Son. We're given a spirit of adoption; we're taught to cry, "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8:15) As we enter into silence with the Lord and become aware of those deep places, we can experience being loved by the Father there. From that place of intimacy, we can boldly witness to Jesus' name. Being deeply rooted in our identity as beloved sons and daughters of the Father allows us to not fear persecution or other difficulties.

Every disciple is invited into an intimate relationship with the Lord that looks different for different people. Each day, a Carthusian monk may have nine hours to spend in silent prayer, a married person with young kids may only have a half hour, and a single person may have an hour. **We enter silent prayer with the Lord by turning off other things.** I recently heard that the average young person looks at their phone more than 350 times a day! That's shocking!

Consider that initial image of New York City and how much the world tries to keep us on a surface level, distracted by the choppy water. Social media is designed to keep us busy, distracted, and numb. It shuts off our prefrontal cortex—the decision-making part of our brain—so that we swipe mindlessly and spend as much time on our devices as possible. We can increase the silence in our days by setting limits on what we do with our devices. If you're on social media, turn off app notifications. It's going to be difficult at first, and you may experience withdrawal. I promise, however, that you will never regret turning off social media.

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

You will never think, "I'm disappointed about having more authentic relationships with others and entering into prayer with greater ease."

Intentionally discern how to limit distractions to prayer. This may even mean music, which influences us even where we're not aware of it. In a waiting room, the background music can move your heart without you even paying attention. If you crank the radio on as soon as you get home or in the car, I invite you to take advantage of the opportunity for silence. Turn off music, turn off things that distract you from the Lord.

We must intentionally carve out time for silence with the Lord. It may be early in the morning, when your kids take an afternoon nap, or late at night. It's going to be difficult and a sacrifice, but you will never regret spending time with the Lord. You won't say, "I'm frustrated by how peaceful life can be when I'm entering into silence with the Father."

Finally, while we all want to experience what the Carthusian described as beholding the gaze between the Father and the Son, it often begins with naming what's going on in our hearts. This is the beauty of silence. Using that image of water again, as we plunge into the deeper water and begin noting what's going on, it helps to pray like a pirate. Use the acronym "A-r-r-r." First, acknowledge what is going on in our hearts. If we're in a place of frustration or anger, or if we're worked up because of an interaction with a co-worker or a family member, we need to gently acknowledge what's stirring in our heart. Then, relate it to Jesus. Tell Jesus, "I am frustrated with my brother. I can't believe this thing that he said to me"—or whatever it might be. After we've related it to Jesus, we're invited to wait to receive.

As Jesus spends time in intimacy with the Father, they dialogue with each other, and we are invited into that reality too. Relate this place of frustration to Jesus, then wait to receive whatever He wants to communicate about it. Maybe it's a gentle conviction that I've done the same thing before, or maybe the Lord gives me compassion for the person. Then, respond to the Lord. Maybe I offer a prayer that gives this brother to the Lord and repents of the judgment in my heart towards him. This simple acronym transforms what could be a distraction into a deeper encounter with the Lord.

Forming this disposition of silence and prayer allows us to live in deep peace and contentment with the Lord. We won't get whipped around by the difficulties of the day or stirred up into a flurry when something goes wrong. It is hard, and I'm still learning this, but it's worth it!



WHAT IS LITURGY?

ARTICLE

This article below was written by Dame Betty for the Christchurch Diocesan Liturgical Commission Newsletter (25) and was published in August 2004.

Catholic liturgy is the Church's official and public worship of Almighty God. It is distinct from personal or group spiritual practices, prayers and devotions. In the liturgy the incarnate Son of God acts in the Church through the power of his Holy Spirit. The most intimate and efficacious presence and action of the Holy Spirit takes place in the Church through the liturgy.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1076) says that since the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost we are in a new era, the age of the Church. During this era the risen Christ continues to make present his work of salvation through the liturgy of the Church, "until he comes". In this age, in our time, he lives and acts in his Church in a new way, sacramentally, in the liturgy. And it is in the liturgy that he fulfils uniquely his promise to remain with us always.

We saw in a previous Newsletter (24) that Christ's power to bring about a new creation, won by his death and resurrection, passed from him into the sacraments of the Church. The sacraments, "God's masterpieces", are integral components of Catholic liturgy. The others are the Mass and the Divine Office. It is these that will be the focus of this Newsletter.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass

The Mass is, of course, itself a sacrament – the supreme sacrament. Recall that the sacraments are signs of God's effective actions which in the Church bring about what they signify. Specifically, sacraments are always Christ's actions – it is he who baptises, reconciles, anoints, ordains, seals our marriage covenants. When Mass is celebrated the risen Christ becomes present among us in all his saving power. Christ's once and for all sacrifice on Calvary is re-presented in unbloody, sacramental form so that we can choose, by our participation of mind, heart and senses, to embrace the salvation it has won for us.

We need to be absolutely clear that the Mass is not just a remembrance of the Last Supper, it is not a memorial tableau. What happened once in historical time now becomes a present reality. It is of the nature of sacramental, liturgical activity to be at once in time and to transcend it. In the celebration of the Eucharist, which is a divine/human action, earth and heaven meet, we have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet for which we are destined. This is what comes about when we receive the whole Christ really present under the appearance of bread and wine in Holy Communion. By his death and resurrection, which make our encounter with him possible, we are offered a share in his new life, and empowered to take part in bringing about his new creation.

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The Mass is celebrated by the whole Church

Whenever and wherever Mass is celebrated, it is an act of the whole Church. Christ, who is indivisible, is offering his sacrifice of love and obedience to his Father by the power of his Spirit, in and with his body, the Church. We who are assembled are only enabled to participate in the celebration by our baptism and through the essential ministry of the ordained priest. The ordained priest is empowered by the authority given by Christ to his apostles and handed down in the Church through the sacrament of Holy Orders. This empowerment no man could claim for himself and no person or community could give him. The Eucharistic Sacrifice requires the priestly ministry of the person who does not speak in his own name or on his own authority but who acts in the person of Christ, the head and shepherd, and thus is capable of representing the whole Church of all times and places.

The local assembly does not celebrate alone

The earthly liturgy does not exist of itself. Our parish worshipping assembly is part of the communion that lives in the life of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who through Christ is the primary actor in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. Then come the angels, the biblical saints (like Abraham, our father in faith), the martyrs, the all-holy Mother of God, the great multitude of the communion of saints, all creation, joining in our hymn of praise. The celebrants of the sacramental liturgy include the whole Body of Christ extending through time and space, then the local worshipping assembly because it is part of this Body.

What follows from these reflections?

- We realise that the Eucharistic celebration is pure gift. We do not bring it about. It is not “our” liturgy. It does not belong to us, we belong to it. We prepare for it with repentance for our sins and a deep desire to participate to the fullest in what is offered to us. We manifest with visible reverence our awareness of the magnitude of what is happening.
- We understand that it is the participation of mind and heart that matters, that this is what is meant by “active” participation, more importantly than what is visible and external, or in having ministries. Ministries such as lectors, altar servers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, exist to serve the participation of the whole community. After all, the indispensable ministry of the priest comes from a sacrament that is likewise primarily for the sanctifying of Christ’s people.

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- We do all in our power to make every material aspect of the liturgy worthy of a sacred action – providing sacred space, sacred music, worthy vessels, ministers trained to witness recollected devotion.
- We remember that because the liturgy is a sacramental action of the whole Church we have no authority to alter it to suit imagined local needs. Because it gathers together people of all kinds and because it is the action of the whole Church, the ritual of the Liturgy is properly ceremonious, formal, repetitive. Its human impact, as the social anthropologists tell us, comes precisely from this repetitive formality, from familiarity, from knowing what comes next, so that we become absorbed into the divine action, able to lose ourselves in it ever more deeply. The liturgy is made up of words, symbols and gestures – the meaning they convey has many levels, of its nature not quick or easy to understand. We are not dealing with ordinary mundane human realities but with sacred, mysterious realities. We should not expect to grasp them at first hearing. Our participation in the liturgy needs for it to be predictable and familiar. Spontaneity and on-the-spot adaptation are completely alien to liturgy and impede our genuine participation.
- We remember that the Sacred Liturgy is an intrinsic part of the Church's Tradition. It has profound theological meaning. As the Church believes, so she prays. To adapt the Eucharistic celebration to meet assumed local needs or relevance to the local community totally misses the point of what it is. It makes no more sense than it would to change the Creed, adding in or leaving out beliefs according to our subjective perceptions.

What do we bring to the Eucharistic celebration?

We bring ourselves in faith and gratitude and love. We exercise our own priestly role by offering ourselves, all we have and are, to be united with the sacrifice of Christ through the liturgical ministry of the priest. How fully we participate will be conditioned by our faith and our longing, will depend on our openness and readiness to receive God's generosity. Our faith does not produce grace, but it disposes us to receive it as the gift God offers us in the Church's liturgy.

When Mass is not available

In the absence of a priest at a scheduled Mass time a Service of the Word may be conducted, in a form authorised by the Bishop, at which Holy Communion may be distributed, using Hosts consecrated at a previous Mass. It does not replace the Mass but is recommended to Catholic people where it is not possible for Mass to be offered.

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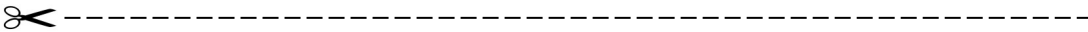
The Divine Office, the daily prayer of the Church

While this is not a sacramental activity, it is nevertheless an integral part of the sacred liturgy of the whole Church. It is undertaken as a daily obligation by priests and religious and also recited by many lay people. It is a vital part of the continuous worship of thanks and praise that goes up from the Church in its work of giving God the glory that belongs to him.

The readings and psalms that make up the Office are chosen by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It has been said always and everywhere the Church exists. The psalms are unique prayers in that they are inspired by the Spirit. They are given prayers. They were taught by Mary and Joseph to Jesus, who used them all his life, and at the hour of his death. They are intended for our use, and also to teach us how to pray. When we pray the Divine Office we know we are praying with the whole Church, Christ's Bride, whom he so loves, and that our prayer will be in harmony with the desires of his heart. This too, then, like all the sacred liturgy, is a huge gift.

What is NOT Liturgy?

There are numerous devotions and forms of prayer designed to be used by gatherings of the faithful. These are obviously valuable and praiseworthy. Jesus promised his special presence with the prayers of a group. (Mt 18,20) The recitation of the Rosary, Novenas, the Way of the Cross, are obvious examples. A prayer service may appropriately be devised by some group for a particular occasion or purpose. But none of these forms part of the Church's liturgy, which is always, and only, the official action of the whole Church.



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