

ISSUE 17

Easter 2024

PERPETUAL
EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter for Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese of Christchurch, New Zealand

Issue 17 - Easter 2024

Greetings. Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024. I hope and pray that you have had a blessed and peaceful year so far and that your Lenten journey has been fruitful for you.

2024, our 11th year, started off with our promotion at parishes in Christchurch on the first Sunday of Lent. It had been a while since we promoted the chapel in this way. It was very effective with over 30 new people signing up to adore for an hour each week. A big welcome to those of you who are reading this newsletter for the first time. Thanks also to all those who helped out during the promotion.

We still have some gaps in our roster during the night. One of our adorers has been adoring 2 hours a night, 7 days a week, for a number of years. Due to ill health and age, he has recently had to give up all his slots. We are very blessed to have had him adore for so long but it has left a big hole in the roster. We have managed to fill most gaps but Tuesday mornings currently has no one rostered from 2am to 4am. 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/>

Pope Francis has dedicated 2024 as a Year of Prayer in the leadup to the Jubilee Year being held next year. There will be a number of initiatives and events throughout the year. I am hoping to hold a Diocesan Prayer Conference at the end of July. This will replace the normal annual adorers retreat. There is more about the year of prayer in this newsletter.

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

Matt O'Connell

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If the lungs of prayer and of the word of God do not nourish the breath of our spiritual life, we risk being overwhelmed by countless everyday things: prayer is the breath of the soul and of life.

Pope Benedict XVI

EUCCHARIST: A SACRAMENT TO BE ADORED

A letter from Pope John Paul II on the 750th anniversary of the first celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi.

1. In 1246, Robert of Thourotte, your distant predecessor in the see of Liege, instituted in his Diocese the Eucharistic feast now known as Corpus Christi, at the request of Juliana of Cornillon ... A few years later in 1264, Pope Urban IV made this feast of the Body of Christ a holy day of obligation for the universal Church.

2. Jesus is no longer present to men in the same way that he was on the roads of Palestine. After the Resurrection, he appeared in his glorious body to the women and to his disciples. Then he took the Apostles and "led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them... he parted from them... and was carried up into heaven" (Lk. 24:50-51). But in ascending to the Father, Christ did not distance himself from men. He dwells forever in the midst of his brethren and, just as he promised, he accompanies them and guides them with his Spirit. Henceforth, his presence is of another kind. Indeed, "at the Last Supper, after celebrating the Passover with his disciples and when he was about to pass from this world to his Father, Christ instituted this sacrament as the perpetual memorial of his Passion..., the greatest of all his miracles, and he left this sacrament to those whom his absence filled with grief, as an incomparable consolation" (St. Thomas Aquinas). Every time we celebrate the Eucharist in the Church, we recall the death of the Savior, we proclaim his Resurrection as we await his return. Thus no sacrament is greater or more precious than that of the Eucharist; and when we receive Communion, we are incorporated into Christ. Our life is transformed and taken up by the Lord.

3. Outside the Eucharistic celebration, the Church is careful to venerate the Blessed Sacrament, which must be reserved... as the spiritual center of the religious and parish community" (Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*, n. 68). Contemplation prolongs Communion and enables one to meet Christ, true God and true man, in a lasting way, to let oneself be seen by him and to experience his presence. **When we contemplate him present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, Christ draws near to us and becomes more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. He grants us a share in his divine life in a transforming union and, in the Spirit, he gives us access to the Father**, as he himself said to Philip: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Contemplation, which is also a Communion of desire, intimately associates us with Christ, and in a very special way associates those who are prevented from receiving it.

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Remaining in silence before the Blessed Sacrament, it is Christ totally and really present whom we discover, whom we adore and with whom we are in contact. However, it is not through the senses that we perceive him and are close to him. Under the appearances of bread and wine, it is faith and love which lead us to recognize the Lord, he who fully communicates to us "the blessings of the Redemption which he accomplished, he, the Master, the Good Shepherd, the Mediator most pleasing to the Father" (Leo XIII, *Mirae caritatis*). As the *Livre de la foi* of the Belgian Bishops recalls, prayer of adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament unites the faithful "with the paschal mystery; it enables them to share in Christ's sacrifice, of which the Eucharist is the 'permanent sacrament'".

4. In honoring the Blessed Sacrament, we also offer a profound thanksgiving to the Father, for in his Son he visited us and redeemed his people. Through the sacrifice of the Cross Jesus gave his life to the world and made us his adoptive children, in his image, establishing a particularly intimate relationship that enables us to call God by the beautiful name of Father. **As Scripture reminds us, Jesus spent nights in prayer, especially at the moments when he had to make important decisions. In his prayer, by an act of filial trust and in imitation of his Lord and Master, the Christian opens his heart and his hands to receive God's gift and to thank him for his freely offered blessings.**

5. It is invaluable to converse with Christ and, leaning against Jesus' breast like his beloved disciple, we can feel the infinite love of his Heart. We learn to know more deeply the One who gave himself totally, in the different mysteries of his divine and human life, so that we may become disciples and in turn enter into this great act of giving, for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. "Following Christ is not an outward imitation, since it touches man at the very depths of his being" (*Veritatis splendor*, n. 21). **We are called to learn from him, to let the Spirit act within us and to fulfill the mission entrusted to us.** In particular, Christ's love spurs us to work constantly for the unity of his Church, to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and to serve men; "we who are many are one body, for we all partake of one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17); such is the Good News which gladdens man's heart and shows him that he is called to take part in the blessed life with God. The Eucharistic mystery is the source, the center and the summit of the Church's spiritual and charitable activity (cf. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 6). **Closeness to Christ in silence and contemplation does not distance us from our contemporaries but, on the contrary, makes us attentive and open to human joy and distress and broadens our heart on a global scale.**

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It unites us with our brothers and sisters in humanity and particularly with children, who are the Lord's dearly beloved. Through adoration, the Christian mysteriously contributes to the radical transformation of the world and to the sowing of the Gospel. Anyone who prays to the Savior draws the whole world with him and raises it to God. Those who stand before the Lord are therefore fulfilling an eminent service. They are presenting to Christ all those who do not know him or are far from him: they keep watch in his presence on their behalf.

7. "When the faithful adore Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that his presence derives from the sacrifice and is directed towards both sacramental and spiritual communion" (Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, n. 50). I therefore encourage Christians regularly to visit Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, for we are all called to abide in the presence of God, thanks to him who is with us until the end of time. In contemplation, Christians will perceive ever more profoundly that the paschal mystery is at the heart of all Christian life. This practice leads them to join more intensely in the paschal mystery and to make the Eucharistic sacrifice, the perfect gift, the center of their life in accordance with their specific vocation, for it "confers an incomparable dignity upon the Christian people" (Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*, n. 67); in fact, during the Eucharist, we are welcomed by Christ, we receive his forgiveness, we are nourished by his word and his bread, we are then sent out on mission in the world; thus each one is called to witness to what he has received and to do the same for his brethren. The faithful strengthen their hope by discovering that with Christ suffering and distress can be transfigured, for with him we have already returned from death to life. As a result, when they offer the Lord of history their own life, their work and all creation, their days are illumined by him.

8. I urge priests, religious and lay people to continue and redouble their efforts to teach the younger generations the meaning and value of Eucharistic adoration and devotion.

How will young people be able to know the Lord if they are not introduced to the mystery of his presence? Like the young Samuel, by learning the words of the prayer of the heart, they will be closer to the Lord, who will accompany them in their spiritual and human growth, and in the missionary witness which they must give throughout their life. **The Eucharistic mystery is in fact the "summit of evangelization" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 28), for it is the most eminent testimony to Christ's Resurrection. All interior life needs silence and intimacy with Christ in order to develop.**

THREE LESSONS ON PRAYER

Written by Fr Paul Scalia for the Catholic Thing www.thecatholicthing.org

The Gospels often put before us beautiful, powerful, sometimes unvarnished, petitions of our Lord. *I believe, help my unbelief!* the demoniac's father blurts out. *Increase our faith!* the Apostles exclaim. In the Gospel of Luke ([11:1-13](#)) the disciples make a request with similar childlike bluntness and candor, **Lord, teach us to pray. These words express what every human heart desires, but what few recognize.** The disciples had been watching Jesus in prayer and instinctively wanted to share in it. Indeed, we all want that union with God that is a genuine conversation. We want to know how to speak with Him truly and authentically, as friends do.

Lord, teach us to pray. Of course, this beautiful request is a prayer in itself. As soon as we speak those words, we're already praying. If you spend hours simply begging for the ability to pray, that is good prayer.

Lord, teach us to pray. **In response to this plea, Jesus does three things. First, he gives them words to pray. He teaches them a version of the Our Father.** It's not the version we're used to (that comes from Matthew's Gospel). But the difference of words is not as important as the principle of his giving words to use. That is, he doesn't expect us to begin speaking to God spontaneously. He knows our weakness, that we don't know the first thing to say.

The Apostle tells us, "We do not know how to pray as we ought." We need to be given the right words when we come before almighty God. That shouldn't surprise us. "What should I say?" is a question we ask whenever we have to speak with a person of some importance. So, our Lord and his Church provide words for us to use in prayer: the Psalms, other verses from scripture, the Liturgy, the Rosary, and so on. These set, structured forms of prayer give us the words that we couldn't know on our own. Here Saint Benedict's maxim comes into play: *Mens nostra concordet voci nostrae* – "May our mind be in accord with our voice." In all other situations, we seek the opposite, that our words be in accord with what we're thinking. We don't want to lie. But when it comes to prayer, we want God to give us the proper words to speak first, and then we conform our minds and hearts to them. Thus, all the prayers of our Tradition – the Psalms and the Liturgy most especially – have shaped the minds and hearts of Catholics for centuries.

Second, our Lord gives reasons to be confident in prayer – but in a strange way, by way of a bad friend and wicked fathers. He speaks first of a friend who is clearly not a good friend. He won't even get out of bed to help. The man in need obtains his help not by friendship but by persistence. An obvious moral of the story is the need to persevere in prayer.

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Article

But another meaning is that if this is the case with an imperfect human friend, how much more confidence should we have in the Lord, who has made us his friends. Similarly, Jesus' somewhat insulting words about fatherhood reveal the goodness of our heavenly Father. "What father among you," he asks, wouldn't provide for his children? "If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so your Father in heaven." The sting of his words about our imperfection serves to reveal the beauty of God's fatherhood and gives the greatest reason for confidence. Even we, imperfect as we are, know what a father should provide. How much more does God the Father.

Finally, our Lord reveals the ultimate purpose of prayer. "If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" But nobody had mentioned the Holy Spirit. The conversation had been about fish and eggs. Our Lord seems to introduce this topic out of nowhere. So, he reveals the real purpose of prayer in a stark manner. No matter what immediate situation might prompt us to pray, the goal is a greater union with the Holy Spirit, to be more deeply introduced into God Himself. No matter what immediate need we might have, God's purpose is to increase His Spirit within us.

Maybe this is why we don't pray more. We want God to answer our prayers. He desires to do so as well. Hence the command to ask, seek, and knock. But God has something more in mind than we do. We're focused on this or that intention. Our Father has a greater desire. Perhaps we sense that if we ask Him for what we need (or what we think we need)- we will be drawn into something more. We don't yet want all that He desires to give us. We want our perceived needs met while He, the perfect Father, wants to give us Himself.

This catechesis on prayer forms a nice unity. It begins with the observation of our Lord's prayer and the plea, *Teach us to pray*. It ends with the gift of the Spirit, who completes our Lord's teaching and who, even more importantly, "comes to the aid of our weakness" and



TESTIMONY

This testimony was written by an adorer, Katrina de Roo.

I started a journey, last year, of saying "yes" to Jesus more. I wanted to deepen my relationship with Him. Part of this included becoming a regular Adorer at the Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

One scripture I have been reflecting on is: "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). It resonates with me and my experiences in Adoration.

With human sight the Blessed Sacrament is a piece of bread. I prayed that God would open my eyes to more. As a faithful father, He did.

With the eyes of my heart, the Blessed Sacrament revealed, healed, consoled and strengthened.

It became the infant Jesus cradled in the arms of His mother. The Word Incarnate. Reminding me of God's loving Covenant. (John 1:14)

It became His pierced heart grieving with me, saying, "I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28)

It was His hand reaching to pull me out of the waves, reminding me to trust Him. (Matt 14:30-33)

It's the slow and gentle unravelling of the week into His hands. The reminder to "be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

It's His loving gaze upon me. (Psalm 136)

God has brought me to a place where the Blessed Sacrament is a living memorial of His promise, His sacrifice and His love in abundance.



2024 - THE YEAR OF PRAYER

INFO

Pope Francis has declared this year as a Year of Prayer for the Catholic Church as a lead up to the great Jubilee Year to be held in 2025. In preparation for the Jubilee, dioceses around the world are invited to promote initiatives to remind people of the centrality of both individual prayer and community prayer.



“Today we begin the Year of Prayer, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and in the world. Let us renew every day the joy and commitment to be men and women of prayer. Prayer that comes from the heart”.

Pope Francis is hoping that this year will be a “great symphony of prayer”. He wants us to spend the prayer in the “presence of the Lord”, listening to him, adoring him, thanking Him for “the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation”. His hope is that this year “makes it possible for every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God and to reveal to him what lies hidden in the depths of their heart”.

The Holy Father has made the theme of the Year of Prayer the Our Father, “the prayer Jesus taught us, the life programme of each of his disciples”. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that “by entering into the holy name of the Lord Jesus we can accept from within, the prayer he teaches us: "Our Father!" His priestly prayer fulfils, from within, the great petitions of the Lord's Prayer: concern for the Father's name, passionate zeal for his kingdom, the accomplishment of the will of the Father, of his plan of salvation and deliverance from evil”. This year of prayer is particularly apt at this time in the world. Fr Jacques Philippe writes that it is “prayer that will give birth to all renewal in society and the world” ... the most useful thing the church can do today is to give people a thirst for prayer and teach them how to pray”. Pope Francis wants all Catholics this year to commit to going “*deeper in their commitment to pray in 2024, and in their love of God*” and to also “*think about how they might accompany someone else to pray during the coming Year of Prayer*”. In 2001, St Pope John Paul II wrote about how important prayer is for Christians - “It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer life that is unable to fill their whole life. In the face of the many trials to which today's world subject's faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but “Christians at risk”. Resources can be found at the Diocesan Website (www.cdcc.nz) or at the official Year of Prayer website (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/verso-il-giubileo/2024-anno-della-preghiera.html>)

PRAYER KNOCKS, FASTING OBTAINS, MERCY RECEIVES

As I have journeyed through the Lenten Season, I found that reading and reflecting on the Office of Readings a great source of nourishment. The Office of Readings are short texts from the Fathers and the Saints of the Church that can be read as part of the Liturgy of the Hours. A sermon by Saint Peter Chrysologus, from the 3rd week of Lent was particularly moving. I have summarised it below.

St Peter starts off by stating that prayer, fasting and mercy are the “three things ... by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures ... Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives ... these three are one, and they give life to each other”.

This is a really powerful statement when we consider that the church gives us three pillars in Lent to turn back to Jesus Christ and grow closer to him. St Peter says that “Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated”. I must admit that I had not given much thought to the inseparable link between prayer, fasting and mercy. He writes that if “you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing ... if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others you open God’s ear to yourself”.

These are powerful words to reflect on and pray with. St Peter then goes on to talk about the need to consider others in the midst of our prayer, fasting and mercy. “When you fast, see the fasting of others. If you want God to know that you are hungry, know that another is hungry. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give”. He is exhorting us to see Jesus Christ in other people, to “show mercy to others in the same way, with the same generosity, with the same promptness, as you want others to show mercy to you”. “Therefore, let prayer, mercy and fasting be one single plea to God on our behalf, one speech in our defence, a threefold united prayer in our favour”.

Further in his sermon he expands on the link between mercy and fasting. He writes that “Fasting bears no fruit unless it is watered by mercy. Fasting dries up when mercy dries up ... However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, sow virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit”.

There is much more in this short text, but this gives you a flavour of it. It has made me stop and reflect on the link between prayer, fasting and mercy in my own life. I encourage to read it and do the same. *Matt O’Connell*

CAN YOU HELP?

Currently we have over 240 adorers signed up to Adore Jesus every week at the Perpetual Adoration Chapel. However we still a number of hours during the week where there is only one adorer rostered on, espically overnight. We always try to ensure that we have a minimum of two per hour so if something happens there is at least one person in the chapel. Although we have lots of visitors, we don't know how long they stay and how regular they are. On occasions people have forgotten, had a flat tyre or been sick and people have had to stay for an extra hour.

If you feel that you could sign up to adore once a week it would be greatly appreciated. Please fill out the form below and send/email it to the address provided.

The hours that require adorers include:

Sundays (12am-6am, 7am-10am, 12pm-2pm, 9pm-11pm), Mondays (12am-6am, 2pm - 5pm, 9pm), Tuesdays (1am-6am), Wednesdays (12am-6am, 10pm-11pm), Thursdays (12am-6am, 8am-12pm, 3pm), Fridays (12am-5am, 7am-10am, 12pm-4pm, 10pm, 11pm) and Saturdays (2-5am, 7am-2pm), 5pm-7pm)



ADORER SIGN UP FORM

NAME: PHONE:

E-MAIL: MOBILE:

ADDRESS:

What day would you like to adore?

What time would you like to adore?

Are you also available to be a substitute?

Please return the completed form to:

Perpetual Adoration, PO Box 4544, Christchurch 8140 or e-mail to chchadoration@gmail.com