

Eucharist

Salvation of souls



Thematic meditations

For Guardian Angel pilgrims

41st Pilgrimage of Notre-Dame de Chrétienté - 27th, 28th y 29th May 2023

Sunday 28th May - Pentecost

The Eucharist, from sacrifice to adoration with Saint Charles de Foucauld

Saint Charles de Foucauld and his Eucharistic devotion

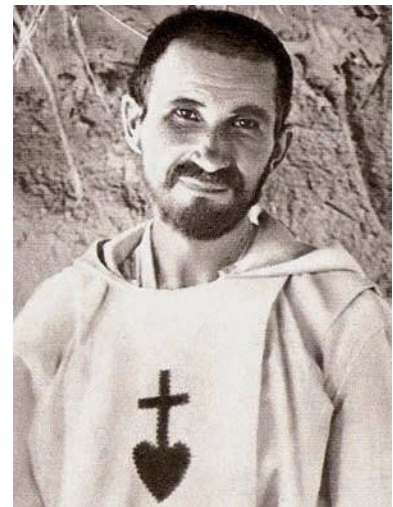
MEDITATION 4

As a hook

Dear pilgrims, I pose a question to you: you all know that Saint Charles de Foucauld had lost his faith. Had he lost his faith because he had not been well prepared for his first communion?

Answer: No. He had been well prepared.

Although he lost his parents at the age of 6, he was brought up carefully, with affection. He had made his first communion devoutly at 14, according to the customs of the time. It was for other reasons that he lost his faith. On the other hand, and this is what we are going to see, on rediscovering his faith Charles de Foucauld was to give a central place to the Eucharist in his life.



Major Ideas

- A biography of Saint Charles de Foucauld
- The great stage of his conversion
- His Eucharistic devotion
- The very specific place of the Eucharist in the faith-reason relationship
- The greatness of the Mass in its gifts
- Mass is not just a simple “thanksgiving”
- Experiencing the wonders of the Mass with Charles de Foucauld

Biography of Saint Charles de Foucauld

Until conversion

Around the age of 15 or 16, under the influence (among other things) of bad reading and bad teachers, Charles lost his faith. Although he was lazy, he nevertheless passed the Saint-Cyr military academy entrance exam. Having become a soldier, he became known for his taste for parties and for his extramarital affair with a woman. His kindness was great and he had the talents of a warlord, but he finally decided to leave the army and made a trip to Morocco as an explorer. He was not to regain his faith until 1886, thirteen years after having lost it.

He himself recounts his famous conversion: “I asked for lessons in religion,” he said. “But Father Henri Huvelin made me kneel down and made me go to confession, and sent me to Communion right away.” God gives himself to Charles gratuitously in the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist. But previously the grace of God was already working his soul, for example when Charles asked for lessons in religion.

You see, dear pilgrims, how the grace of God uses all the resources of his intelligence to prepare, carry out and confirm his act of faith: for the act of faith is an act of the intelligence and of the will under the influence of divine grace.

Dear pilgrims, this is how it happens in every believer: personal reflection and the intervention of grace unite harmoniously without opposing each other.

As soon as he found his faith again, Charles de Foucauld never stopped going to Mass every day. Once converted, he never looked back. What was one of the main reasons that led Charles de Foucauld to convert? In his family, he had before his eyes one of his cousins, Marie de Bondy, who was both intelligent and charitable. Dear pilgrims, if you shine with intelligence and charity, you will do wonders! The grace of God will have seized you. It will make you convert crowds!

After converting

I pose a second question: how long after his conversion did Father de Foucauld become a priest? Long or not long? Answer: fifteen years. He was ordained a priest at the turn of the century, in 1901, when he was already 43 years old. His humility had made him postpone the prospect of ordination. He first lived as a Trappist monk (1890-1896) in France, then in Syria. Then he became a hermit in Nazareth (1897-1900). Once ordained a "free-priest" in the diocese of Viviers, France, he wanted to make the tabernacle and the sacrifice of the Mass present, even among those who did not know Jesus, in the Sahara, among the Tuaregs, among whom he was killed, at age 58, as part of a war against Christians. For a long time, he had been preparing to die a martyr, to resemble Jesus, who died on a cross. Gradually, he also understood, more deeply, the greatness of the gift of self, made even in simple daily life.



Gradually, he also became more and more aware of the importance of intelligence training. On July 24, 1914, he had written: "May God keep France! How did she get to where she is? The extreme decline in philosophical and religious studies has done great damage to the faith: even a young man, brought up piously is far from being sufficiently instructed in philosophy and he finds himself unarmed at the age when the objections of his own mind or in books arise."

Eucharistic devotion of Saint Charles de Foucauld

An anecdote: two priests are waiting for Father de Foucauld in Algiers for lunch. Noon arrives, but no Father de Foucauld. Quarter past twelve, half past twelve, still no one. At a quarter to one, one of the two priests opens the door of the church. He sees Father de Foucauld kneeling in front of the tabernacle and so immersed in the adoration of Jesus in the Host that he is obliged to go and say to him gently: "Father, it is almost one o'clock." The Saint confessed that he had arrived before noon. "But," he added, "I was talking to Jesus about several souls I met this morning whose Christian life leaves something to be desired... [...] France must give priests to French Africa."

The person who told the story attests: "I will never forget the emphatic way in which he said this."

It should not be believed that Charles did not suffer trials, since he confessed, during his very happy novitiate at Notre Dame des Neiges: "The offices, the holy Mass, prayer, where my dryness was so painful, are very sweet to me, despite the innumerable distractions of which I am guilty." It is consoling for us to know that such a fervent Trappist had so many distractions!

A sentence about the greatness of the Mass

The oldest among you, dear pilgrims, will have been able to read a sentence by Saint Charles de Foucauld, which was reproduced on the souvenir image of a pilgrimage of Notre Dame de Chrétienté: "A single Mass glorifies God more than the praise of all the angels and the martyrdom of all men could do; the martyrdom of all men and the adoration of all the angels are something finite, a Mass is infinite." This statement is found in article 18 of the Directory of a religious community that Saint Charles founded. Saint Charles does not exaggerate. The Mass is Infinite. Because at Mass, Jesus, who is God, is the chief priest. The human priest is only the instrument of Jesus. Each Mass is the Infinite made present in the finite.

The three gifts that Jesus gives us at Mass

Dear pilgrims, Saint Charles de Foucauld enumerates three infinite gifts that Jesus gives us in the Holy Eucharist: the 1st gift is His "presence;" the 2nd gift is that He gives Himself in "food;" and the 3rd gift is that He offers Himself in "sacrifice".

Let's listen to Jesus. Saint Charles de Foucauld has Jesus say this in a meditation of 1898, written in the Holy Land. It is Jesus who speaks to us in this text: "So you touch me, your tongue, your mouth touches my body; my entire being, Divinity, humanity, descends into you; I prove my love to you in an ineffable way and by this I strongly urge you to render me love for love, to give everything to me, to live only for me, I who give myself completely to you... [. . .] and I marry you completely, without restriction, me so great, you so small! Through this Sacrament you truly become my Spouses!... What confidence you will have for the future when you see that I give myself entirely to you; what will I not give to those to whom I give myself entirely? What strength do you not have when you have God in you? With what new and ineffable purity do you not shine when Purity itself has descended into you, when you are so intimately united with the Holy, with the Perfect?... What happiness do you not feel when you are united - in a more intimate way than it is possible for man to conceive it nor to desire - to Your Beloved, to the infinitely lovable Being! [...] »

Spiritual Marriage and Public Worship

Dear pilgrims, Saint Charles de Foucauld calls communion "an ineffable marriage," because of the personal intimacy that the reception of the host makes possible. But the Saint also encourages us to public worship, that which is accomplished in the splendour of liturgical ceremonies: "Let us love public worship very much, let us take part in it...let us participate in its pomp in our small measure [. . .] God [...] as king, wants public worship in parishes, great religious ceremonies." "Our Lord shows us [...] with evidence, that, [...] in certain cases, He approves of the magnificence, the profusion, and the richness of His public worship."

A sacrament Sacrifice and not a pure thanksgiving

Dear pilgrims, Saint Charles de Foucauld can help us to fight against very current and dangerous errors, which affirm that we can and that we must today free ourselves from the ancient pastoral care which was based on the administration of sacraments, in particular because of the lack of priests or the decline in religious practice. No: the heart of the mission of the priest is to sanctify souls through the sacraments: without the Mass, without the sacraments, there is no longer any Christian life.

Father de Foucauld does not reduce the Mass to a simple "thanksgiving" either. Certainly, "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving". But the Mass is also the "Holy Sacrifice." Saint Charles de Foucauld, on becoming a priest, rejoiced that there was "one more tabernacle, and each day one

more holy sacrifice." The multiplication of the Holy Sacrifice is so important that he obtained permission from Rome, exceptional at the time, to say Mass without servers.

Conclusion

Dear pilgrims, with what fervour, like Saint Charles de Foucauld, we must unite ourselves to the prayers of the traditional Mass where the "immaculate victim" is mentioned (*hostiam immaculatam*,) at the offertory and the canon of the Mass, and the propitiatory effect of the Holy Sacrifice: "*sit te miserante propitiabile*", "by your mercy, may he attract your favour." It is a real "treasure" to use a word that the instruction *Universae Ecclesiae* of April 30, 2011 applied to the Roman liturgy in the *usus antiquior*. The Mass comes to us like a river laden with salutary Mercy. Just as the those present at the Mass of Father de Foucauld were filled with admiration, so we must help to convert all those who see us living the marvels of the Eucharist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass according to the traditional liturgy.

The Eucharist: The sacrifice of Jesus made present on the altar

MEDITATION 5

As a hook

"Whenever you eat this bread and drink this chalice, you announce the death of the Lord, until he comes."

These words of Saint Paul resonate with us today, dear pilgrims. When we attend Mass, when the sacrament of the Eucharist is mysteriously performed on the altar during the Holy Sacrifice: we announce the death of Christ.

What a strange way for a God to show His love to men! To show His omnipotence, His mercy, by offering His own life on a simple piece of wood; to renew this death at each Mass to continue to communicate to men, what Christ transmitted to us: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep."



Major Ideas

- Jesus washes away sins with the gift of the Cross
- On the cross, Jesus is priest and victim
- By offering Himself, Jesus more than makes up for offenses of humankind
- The Cross is the love letter that Christ left us
- The Redemption continues in the Mass
- Bring our crosses to Mass and melt them into that of Jesus

A perfect victim for a perfect sacrifice

Many offerings have been made to God since Adam and Eve were expelled from the earthly paradise. Although they were described as "sweet smelling", such as the lamb of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, or of Melchizedek, all these offerings nevertheless remained very imperfect. How, then, can we redeem the fault of our first parents? And not only that original sin, but also all the others, the innumerable sins committed afterwards? How do we properly address God to obtain this forgiveness? The one we have offended being the infinite Being *par excellence*, who can reach him so that He listens to us? Who can repair such outrages?

"Happy fault that has won for us so great a Redeemer."

Only a perfect victim could achieve such reparation, such satisfaction that could allow us to reconnect with the One whom we despised through sin. Christ, by offering Himself, becomes both priest and victim, and thereby effects the perfect Sacrifice that we so badly needed. By becoming incarnate, the Eternal Word became "sinless brother of the sinners that we are." It took a perfect victim, a perfect man, a God made man to be able to redeem the faults committed.

And how does He decide to redeem us?

In an act of absolute love, by the offering He makes of Himself to the Father, on the Cross, because "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for those one loves."

"Offence is erased only by love," Saint Augustine tells us.

And, as Saint Thomas Aquinas explains, "Christ, in suffering out of love and obedience, offered to God something greater than the compensation for all the offenses of the human race required.

- First, because of the greatness of the love by virtue of which He suffered;
- Second, because of the dignity of the life He gave as satisfaction, for it was the life of a God-man;
- Thirdly, because of His sufferings and the acuteness of His pain.

Everything is summed up on the Cross!

The sacrifice of Our Lord is the summit of His life, as well as the salvation of ours, we must gaze upon this tender victim and drink in what flows from it.

If we turn our gaze to the Cross, scrutinizing in it what Christ teaches us, we can read there the love letter for men that the Son of God has left us. "The cross is the most learned book one can read. Bitter as it is, we are never happier than when drowning in its bitterness. The more you go to that school, the more you want to stay there. The time you spend there is always without boredom. We know everything we want to know, and we are never satisfied with what we taste."

This Cross... this sacrifice: we have the immense good fortune to be able to witness its bloodless renewal during the Holy Mass.

How the unique sacrifice of Christ is perpetuated

"Do this in memory of me."

Our Lord's sacrifice was offered once and for all on Good Friday, on the Cross. But in order that this sacrifice can touch the souls of all times and all places, Christ instituted the Holy Mass. At Mass, not only is Jesus really present under the appearances of bread and wine, but His unique sacrifice is actualised, renewed before our eyes, so that we can unite ourselves to it and receive the fruits, the graces of redemption. In truth, when we attend Mass, we are at Golgotha! At Mass, the principal priest, who acts, is Christ: and the human priest is the instrument of Christ, by virtue of the very words of Christ: "This is my body, given for you. Do this in memory of me."

Thus, the mystery of redemption extends to us in this magnificent sacrament. The whole work of redemption is there contained and summed up in this gift that God makes of Himself in the consecrated host. During the elevation, we see, under the appearances of bread and wine, the child-God born in the simplicity of the manger, the victim raised on the Golgotha of the altar, the resplendent glory of Him who has risen from the dead. Everything is contained therein, nothing is lacking for our salvation. How could we remain impassive in the face of this? How could we allow the Mass just to pass us by, by attending it too lightly when we remember all this?

What is our place at Mass?

The Mass is a magnificent act, but however divine this offering is, we must not be discouraged from finding a legitimate place in it.

What is our role in this sacrificial rite in which we participate when we attend the Most Holy Mass? First of all, it consists in associating ourselves with the four ends, the four aims of the Mass: we

must contemplate this magnificent scene unceasingly while adoring this spotless victim, we must thank him for this gift (it is moreover what the word eucharist means: to give thanks), we must ask him for forgiveness, remembering that this sacrifice is a propitiatory sacrifice and that Christ offered himself because of our sins; finally, the Mass is an opportunity to ask the Lord for the graces we need, beginning with the grace of communion. To adore, to thank, to ask forgiveness, to ask for graces: four essential dimensions which are found in this oblation and which we must make our own. "So that every sinner may be whitened in the blood of the Lamb, Christians must necessarily associate their work with that of Christ."

"Orate fratres" - "pray my brothers, so that my sacrifice which is also yours will be pleasing to God the Almighty Father."

Communion with the sacrifice of Christ

This sacrifice must also be ours. We must join ourselves to this Cross of Christ, as Saint Paul says: "I am attached to the cross with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." No passivity, but a deep and active search for Christ Himself. "Come to me" says Our Lord to us, and not "wait for me." Let us seek with all our heart to unite ourselves to the Cross of Jesus. And this is done, primarily, through communion. By communicating, not only do we receive the Body of Christ within us, but we are also associated with His sacrifice. Let us always remember that the word "host" means: victim. By receiving the host, I offer myself with Christ, becoming with Jesus the victim of his sacrifice.

Bring our cross to Golgotha, and melt it into that of Jesus

"As I offered myself voluntarily to my Father for your sins, arms stretched out on the Cross, and body naked, reserving nothing for myself [...], so you must daily in the sacrifice of Mass, offer yourself to me, as a pure and holy host, from the depths of your heart and with all the power of your soul. What do I ask of you but that you surrender to me wholeheartedly and as intimately as you can."

For the sacrifice of Christ to bear fruit in us, we must unite ourselves to it: this is also the role of the Offertory. During this part of the Mass, the faithful are called to place, "on the paten, with the host", all the little sacrifices of their lives, their little daily crosses: "If someone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

We will accomplish what Christ expects of us, participate in His sacrifice, humbly pursue Him, according to these profound words of Saint Paul: "What is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, I complete in my flesh, for his body, which is the Church."

In the suffering of His Passion, we perceive the heart burning with love of Christ who offers Himself for us and who rejoices that we unite ourselves to His majestic work. When we humbly assist at Holy Mass, we associate ourselves with the sacrifice of Our Lord, we taste the pierced heart of Jesus, from whom His love pours out on all humanity. Man enters into communion with his God through sacrifice.

The 4 purposes of Jesus' sacrifice

In relation to God

1. **Render to God the supreme worship which is due to Him (latreutic).** God is honoured at Mass as much as He deserves because He is honoured by God Himself. This is why the honour and homage that we render to God through Jesus Christ at Mass are infinite.

2. **Offering to God worthy thanksgiving (eucharistic).** This sacrifice makes it possible to thank God worthily for all the benefits received.

In relation to man

3. **Obtain remission of our sins and the penalties due to them (propitiatory).** Jesus Christ renews the immolation, which on the Cross He made of His divine person, for the redemption of our faults. This same blood which He then shed in favour of the guilty human race, He is willing to offer again, and to apply it especially through the Mass to the sins of Him who celebrates it, of those who cause it to be celebrated and of anyone who attend it.
4. **Obtain abundant graces (intercessory).** At the altar, it is Jesus Christ who speaks for us, who, for us, offers His very precious Blood: He takes our cause in hand, He intercedes for us, and becomes our powerful advocate.

How should we adore the Eucharist?

MEDITATION 6

As a hook

Dear pilgrims,

This evening, at the Gas bivouac, Eucharistic adoration will be available to pilgrims. It is without doubt one of the greatest highlights of our pilgrimage: the Lord comes to visit our camp, He will be really present in the middle of our chapters, from 9:15 p.m. to 4:30 a.m., patiently waiting for His children to come to Him. This year, this adoration is also part of the extension of the theme of our pilgrimage: yes, the Eucharist is truly the salvation of souls! So, even if we are very tired this evening, even if we have the legitimate desire to spend time with our friends, do not go to bed before having paid a visit to the Lord present in the monstrance, to adore Him.



Major Ideas

- Adoration is a very special prayer
- Adoration does not seek profit
- It is first of all the contemplation of the greatness of God
- Adoration gives us the joy of God's happiness
- To adore is also to recognize oneself as a simple creature, kept alive by the goodness of God
- By adoring, we find our happiness and our salvation.
- In adoration, God fills our hearts
- Let us learn the gestures of the body which dispose us to adoration

What is Adoration?

But what exactly is adoration? The purpose of this talk is to make us rediscover this central act of faith, which is often confused with many other things.

Firstly, notice that “to adore” is not precisely the same thing as “to pray;” or rather, to adore is a very special prayer: it is the first and greatest of the four acts of prayer (which are, as a reminder: to adore; to give thanks; to ask for forgiveness; and to ask for graces).

The mistake we sometimes make when we come to adore is to begin our prayer by talking about ourselves. We come before Jesus, and quite quickly we start talking to Him about our difficulties, our worries, we lay our requests at His feet, we ask His forgiveness, etc. I am not telling you that this is bad, of course! But that is not adoration. To be “worshippers in spirit and in truth,” the first thing to do is not to look at ourselves: but to look at God. Thus, adoration is not, in itself, a prayer of petition. Adoration is a gratuitous act, adoration does not seek profit, it is entirely “for God”, and this is what makes it rich: by adoring, man fulfills his greatest vocation, which is to pay homage to the Lord and glorify His name.

“We only adore God” we repeat to children who love chocolate a little too much. And indeed, to adore is an intimate act, reserved for God: He alone deserves adoration, because He alone is Lord: “*tu solus Dominus*,” we sing in the *Gloria*. To adore is quite simply to recognize, with our

intelligence, that God is Lord, that He is our Creator and our Master, and that we are totally dependent on Him in all things: and it is to rejoice in everything in our heart.

So how do we do that? I suggest that you remember the two main stages of adoration that the "masters" in adoration advise us, that is, the great saints.

The First Step of Worship: Contemplating the Greatness of God

This is the first step: to adore well, you must begin by looking **only** at God. This is very difficult, as we have said, because we quite often rush into our prayer, to speak about ourselves right away. That is also very impolite: when we meet a friend, we first hear from him, before talking to him about our adventures and our miseries...

Thus, to adore well, you must first place yourself in the presence of God and look at Him, without looking at yourself. We rarely do. But if we did it well, if for a moment we could grasp who it is who is before us, in this humble host, the Eternal God, Creator, so Great and Mysterious, then of its own accord, our soul would kneel down to adore him: God is God, and He is there, present! This is what the Three Kings experienced when they came to the manger: "They entered the house, saw the little child with Mary, His mother, and prostrating themselves they adored Him." This is what Saint Thomas understood when he believed in the Resurrection of Christ and exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" This is what the angels of heaven do constantly, as Revelation describes: "And all the angels stood round about the throne and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne, and worshiped God, saying, *Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power, and strength, be to our God forever and ever! Amen!*" In these three scenes, no request is made to God, no benefit is asked for men: only the cry of adoration, of homage, arises before God.

There is a word to describe this greatness of God: this word is the transcendence of God. Alas, this idea is much neglected today. Admittedly, God is also a friend, a loved one, we will discuss that soon enough, but in the end, He is God! A Dominican said: "Adoration is the spontaneous reaction of the soul which perceives the greatness of God. And this profound realization that God is there will provoke in us a joy, a very pure joy, because it is completely disinterested, a joy of God's happiness, a joy that God is God, a joy that God has all this perfection, the joy that He exists. Have you ever experienced this joy, this happiness of saying to yourself: 'It's so wonderful that God exists!' Yet this is what the Mass tries to engender in us, in the exaltation of the prayer of the *Gloria*, the *Sanctus* or even in the Preface. This pure joy of the praise of God, of His perfections, of His admirable greatness, is the joy of the psalms: "Come, let us sing with joy to the Eternal! Let us shout for joy towards the rock of our salvation. Let us meet Him with praises, let us ring out hymns in His honour! For the Lord is a great God, He is a great king above all others."

So let's try to begin our adoration with this simple gaze on God, forgetting ourselves in a way; we could help ourselves by reading the *Gloria*, a psalm, or the first part of the Our Father (the first 3 requests, all turned towards God). By doing this, we will be in the attitude of Saint John the Baptist, who, speaking of Jesus, affirmed: "He must increase and I must decrease."

The second stage of adoration: recognizing oneself as a humble creature

After this simple look at God, adoration leads us to look at ourselves. "Who am I in relation to God?" The answer is simple: I am a creature. We need to be reminded of this often! Because otherwise we risk falling into pride. If I exist at this moment, if I can breathe, speak, pray, if I can make this pilgrimage to Chartres, it is because God, this Great God so high and so mysterious, thinks of me, loves me, and right now gives me life.

Children learning their catechism are often told: "If God stopped thinking about you for a moment, you wouldn't exist." It's so true! The understanding that must be developed here, in this second stage, is that of our total dependence on God. No, we didn't make ourselves. We exist, it is true, but we exist only because God loves us and gives us existence. And not only existence as an initial spark, but at every moment, God keeps us, carries us, communicates His life to us, and more: His gifts, His graces, His blessings. We are permanently connected to God. This is also the origin of the word religion, which comes from *religare*, to bind, in Latin. To adore is to recognize and love this: it is to try to see this invisible bond which permanently connects me to God. And from that gaze springs a new joy: Lord, I am happy to be your child. I rejoice in this dependence I have on you. This joy is the joy of the Magnificat, the joy of the Virgin Mary who recognizes herself as the humble servant of the Lord and who loves this humble position: this pure joy is the opposite of the attitude of the sinner who on the contrary refuses to be dependent, refuses to receive and pretends to direct his life alone; it is the cry of Satan: "I will not serve!"

This joy of receiving everything from God can sometimes, it is true, be difficult to achieve in the face of the trials of life and the pains that we go through. But adoration, once again, helps us to see that, if God sometimes allows certain difficulties, His hand constantly accompanies and carries us, and He can bring out great good: our future is in God's hands, and as God is good, we are assured that He will take good care of us. Adoration helps our soul to find peace and consolation, like a child who, when he is in pain, takes refuge in the arms of his parents. Madame Elisabeth expressed this with these words: "What will happen to me today, O my God, I do not know. All I know is that nothing will happen to me that you haven't planned from all eternity. That is enough for me, O my God, to be at peace. I adore your eternal purposes, I submit to them with all my heart."

Of course, once these two stages of adoration have been completed, our conversation with God can continue with the other three acts of prayer: giving thanks for the graces received; asking forgiveness for our sins; asking for graces (prayer of supplication properly speaking). And besides, our prayer will be all the more fervent and true if we have taken the time, beforehand, to adore God as is necessary.

The effort of adoration: courage and perseverance!

Adoration is one of the greatest actions we can do on this Earth, as it is in Heaven, for that matter. It is first of all an act of justice: because we are creatures, and ultimately, we were created to glorify God, to recognize His greatness and our dependence on him. This is also the ultimate goal of the Mass, too: a sacrifice of homage to God. And what is truly great is that by carrying out this mission of being "adorers," we find our happiness and our salvation: for this God towards whom we turn in adoration, is also the God who fills our heart.

But worship is not an easy act. If life were like a river, then we see that we easily let ourselves, during our days, be carried away by the current, by material things, distractions, occupations... This is what Charles Péguy called "the spirituality of the plank:" we let ourselves be carried away... But for the Christian, on the contrary, to live is to try to go upstream, to return to the source, which is God: because we come out of God to return to God, this is what Saint Augustine expressed in a famous phrase: "You made us for yourself, O my God, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." This return to God, which is the goal of our whole life, will fill us with happiness, but it requires a real effort of recollection, regularity, perseverance, to return to the source in adoration every day. So courage, dear pilgrims! Let us regularly come before the Blessed Sacrament, source of living water from which springs all life. Regular adoration brings with it magnificent fruits, precisely because we have come freely to God, without expecting anything except the joy of being with Him: and in return, the Lord fills us with His gifts.

To help you, you will find something new in the pilgrim's booklet: spiritual texts to nourish your prayer of adoration.

The Gestures of Adoration

Adoration is inner prayer; but as we are bodies and souls, certain bodily gestures can help us to adore better.

Here a few of the many possible gestures of worship:

Genuflection. On entering a church, before the real presence, the liturgy asks us to genuflect. By this gesture, the whole body lowers itself before the Presence of God; we recognize that He is greater than us and that we owe Him homage and respect. Let us try to do it slowly, and this action will become a true gesture of adoration. By genuflecting, we can say to ourselves, inwardly, like Saint Thomas: “My Lord and my God”, or like Saint John the Baptist: “He must increase, and I must decrease.”

Traditionally, when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance, one genuflects on both knees, accompanied by a deep bow.

Kneeling in prayer expresses the same idea as genuflection, except that, as it lasts for a longer time, it manifests our desire to remain humble and small before the Lord. To this, we can also add the aspect of **penance**, which is an important dimension of our relationship with God, much forgotten today.

Clasped hands come from an ancient medieval tradition: when a vassal took an oath of loyalty to his lord, he began by kneeling in front of him with joined hands, and the lord came to put his hands around those of the vassal: this gesture symbolizes that we place our whole person in the hands of God, and that God assures us of all His protection in return.