

1. March 2020

“Eucharistic adoration”

Answering questions

Part 1

Today I would like to go back to questions or suggestions from the audience, which may be of general interest.

1. I was asked if I could say something about Eucharistic adoration.
2. The other question came from China about the difference between the Catholic and Orthodox doctrine of heaven and hell.

First of all to the topic 1:

I suppose that the question is meant in relation to the so-called silent adoration before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, which may be accompanied by singing and meditation, but which takes place primarily in silence.

In the apostolic journeys of Harpa Dei in Mexico we have found the very welcome practice of exposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration after the celebration of Holy Mass. This was, to my knowledge, suggested by St. John Paul II during his visit to Mexico.

The practice of silent adoration is very valuable because it helps us grow into a contemplative attitude. Contemplation is not only for certain religious orders - even if they are called to cultivate contemplation in a special way - but is a whole way of life. It is primarily an attitude of receiving and to act from what is received. Jesus himself makes us aware that he himself receives and does everything from his Father what he hears and sees (*cf. Jn 5,19*).

The silence before the Blessed Sacrament or even before the tabernacle, when the Lord is not to be seen but is present in the tabernacle, teaches the soul to open herself to the gentle presence of the Lamb. Perhaps the image of a child breastfed by the mother can be used as a help. The child is satisfied and sated, knowing to be safe in the love of the mother.

It is the same with our soul. She is at home before the Lord because she receives the mysterious presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist in its deepest dimension. She drinks God's presence or we can describe it with a picture from the New Testament: she lies at the breast of the Lord, as St. John the Apostle in the Gospels (*cf. Jn 13,23*).

St. Augustine describes that the soul has several areas. Some areas are directly open to God. We could call them the "chambers of contemplation". Others are more open to the world such as reason, science, practical intelligence, etc., and the others more to the sensual sphere. In Eucharistic adoration, so to speak, the "chambers of contemplation are opened and God can enter directly into the soul with his light, while in the other chambers God communicates through the created light (reason).

Through contemplation, the silent dwelling before the presence of the Lord as a way to the basic contemplative attitude of human existence, the "inner chambers" of the soul are now touched. One can sometimes notice this through an inner peace, a "being gathered", an inner "arrival", which is otherwise difficult in the hustle and bustle of this world. Delicate bonds of love are formed between the Lord in the Eucharist and the soul.

The one who begins to taste the "spiritual taste" that comes from this way of prayer will always return to remain before the tabernacle.

One can compare this way of prayer how to receive the Holy Communion. Sometimes, during Holy Mass, one experiences a sacred silence after the reception of the Holy Communion. The faithful seem satiated, at least for moments.

It is rightly said that in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament a spiritual continuation of Holy Communion occurs. From this point of view, it is very logical that adoration often takes place after Holy Mass in order to continue the reception of Holy Communion.

The Lenten journey to Easter, which has now begun, invites us to cultivate stronger this dimension of our existence. Especially when we tend to see our Christian and human being more active, this is all the more important.

Eucharistic adoration is an invitation of the Lord's love, and the silence before Him is a response of our love, just as Mary in the Gospel placed herself at the feet of the Lord (*cf. Lk 10,39*).

Tomorrow I will give some more aspects and also advice regarding our distractions, which we often experience precisely when we want to enjoy the presence of the Lord in silence.