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A SERIES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Eucharistic Adoration

(Part I)

Remaining in silence before the Blessed Sacrament, whether the Blessed Sacrament is exposed or simply present in the Tabernacle, has a great effect on the deepening of prayer. Therefore, in the context of these meditations on the theme of prayer, it is fitting that we dedicate two days specifically to Eucharistic Adoration.

Before we get into the subject, I will give just a brief explanation for those unfamiliar with the Catholic devotion. Catholics believe that, after the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ during Holy Mass, His presence remains in the host, even after the liturgy has concluded. This is why Catholics genuflect (i.e., bow) before the tabernacle, where the consecrated hosts are kept.

Having made this clarification, let us get down to business: Perhaps we cannot always perceive in a palpable way the efficacy of the Lord's Eucharistic presence. Indeed, His sacramental presence in the Eucharist is a reality that we can contemplate only with the eyes of faith. We believe that Jesus is there because the Word of God and the Church assure us of it. We believe because the bread and wine, transformed into the Flesh and Blood of Christ during the consecration, awaken our faith in Him. With our external eyes we see only a white host; with the eyes of faith, on the other hand, we behold the very presence of the Lord.

What happens in the interior of the soul when we remain in the presence of the Lord? We Catholics call it "spiritual communion". In it, we do not physically receive the presence of the Lord in the holy host, as happens in sacramental communion; rather, we receive him directly in our spirit. In this way, God gently reveals Himself to our soul. His presence in the Holy Eucharist is like a sweet breeze that caresses our soul or like a pleasant warmth that creates an ever more trusting relationship.

This delicate way in which the Lord penetrates the soul reminds us of a phrase from the Sequence of Pentecost: *"Come, sweet guest of the soul, rest from our toil, respite from hard work, breeze in the hours of fire, joy that wipes away tears and comforts in mourning."*

By frequently remaining in silence before the Tabernacle, our soul is rooted in the Lord and finds its home in Him. The longing for His presence grows more and more. Since our spiritual life is a progressive "return home" to the Heart of the Father, Eucharistic Adoration will be an excellent spiritual means to grow in love, as it is an extension of sacramental communion.

Being so directly in the presence of God, we are, above all, the receivers. So it is now and so it will be in eternity. Therefore, when we remain in silence before the Lord in the Tabernacle or before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, we find a greater inner serenity and refuge. And this, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the world, is of the utmost importance for our souls. Prayer should not become a heavy obligation to which we must submit by force; rather, it should be a foretaste of heaven.

Whoever begins to practice frequent Eucharistic Adoration will find that it becomes a growing interior necessity, the daily spiritual bread that reminds us of what is most important, namely, to remain close to the Lord.

And for God Himself it is a marvellous possibility to communicate with us, to put His dwelling place in us, to fill us with His presence.