

Prayer Before the Blessed Sacrament

When you think of it, there is very little you and I can do for God. He created and owns the entire universe. He keeps it all going and doesn't need anything from us. Providentially, God bestows his love upon us individually and as a people in many different ways each day. We in turn accept the call to love in return, to make love the central focus of our lives.

But there is something that we humans can offer to God that pleases him: our praise and gratitude. The vision of heaven that is revealed in the Bible always has elements of worship of God. "Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created." Rev. 4:11 Some day when we are caught up in the glory of God in heaven, and know our God intimately, we will join all the angels and saints in endless adoration. Our time of prayer here on earth is like a rehearsal for what will occur in paradise.

Contemplative communities of men and women pray together 5 times a day using the psalms, Bible passages and other readings. There are many elderly and homebound who have taken on a similar custom of prayer devotions that honor God and bring blessings to their families. Seeing religious programs on television, such as Eternal World Television Network on Catholic Television, brings much comfort and strength to those who are alone much of the day.

From time to time, we should take an inventory on how we pray and how often we pray. Most people have their favorite prayer book or devotions. These become the foundation of their prayer life. Some will make a sacrifice to attend daily Mass more often, pray the Stations of the Cross or pray the rosary. I wish to suggest to those who are physically able to visit a Church daily to spend some quiet time with the Lord. Such a practice will bring serenity to an otherwise busy day.

Attendance at Mass is the primary way we honor and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Yet when we come to visit our Lord present in the tabernacle, we are truly worshiping God along with the heavenly court. I suggest that you come close to the altar and sit with Jesus in silent adoration. Don't read a lot of prayers. Rather listen with the ears of your heart to the symphony of love that surrounds you. Maybe imagine God's love embracing you. Or the mercy of God cleansing and healing you.

Like Moses before the burning bush, you are on holy ground when you pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament. You may even wish to take your shoes off. God doesn't mind. These precious moments of union with God do not need a lot of words. Some people will say a short phrase frequently like "I love you, Jesus" or "Thank you, Jesus." Bask in the tender presence of God and be at peace.

Let the angels be astounded, and let everyone come together like sheep to the presence of this God who is concealed beneath the species of the Sacrament. St. Thomas of Villanova