THE DAILY BREAD

The Acts of the Apostles



Eucharistic Adoration

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

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The Mass & the Sacraments

Eucharistic Adoration

I'm Sitting Here. Now What?

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INTRODUCTION

I’m Sitting Here. Now What?

A man walks into a quiet chapel where the Eucharist is exposed for adoration, the Host visible in the golden monstrance on the altar, a few people scattered in the pews in silence. He has heard that Eucharistic Adoration is powerful, that the saints loved it, that he should try it. So he sits down. And within about ninety seconds, he hits the question that stops nearly every man who has ever attempted this: I′m sitting here. Now what?

What is he supposed to do? There is no Mass to follow, no prayers being said aloud, no structure, no program. Just silence, and the Host, and himself, and a stretch of time. He does not know what to do with his mind. He tries to pray and runs out of things to say in five minutes. His thoughts wander to his to-do list. He wonders if he is doing it wrong, if everyone else in the chapel is having some profound experience while he sits there fidgeting. After fifteen restless minutes he leaves, quietly concluding that Adoration is for other people, more spiritual people, and not for him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — Matthew 11:28

If that is your experience, this book is written for you, and its entire purpose is to answer that one question: I′m sitting here, now what? Because here is the truth that no one told the fidgeting man in the chapel. He was not doing it wrong. He was doing it exactly right, and the restlessness and the not-knowing were not failure but the ordinary beginning of the thing. Nobody sits down before the Blessed Sacrament and immediately knows what to do, any more than a man drops into deep water and immediately swims. It has to be learned. And it can be, easily, because Adoration is finally the simplest prayer there is, so simple that its very simplicity is what confuses the modern man, who expects prayer to be an activity and cannot at first understand a prayer whose essence is just to be there.

This book will teach you what Eucharistic Adoration is and why it has such power, and then, practically and at length, what to actually do with the time: how to begin, what to do with your wandering mind, how to move from talking to listening to simply resting, and how a man builds this into his life. If you have ever sat before the Blessed Sacrament and not known what to do, or never tried because you assumed you would not know, this book removes the barrier.

The aim is that you come to love the thing that the saints loved above almost every other prayer: time spent, quietly, in the physical presence of the living God, doing nothing more than being with the One who is always waiting there for you.

It is worth saying plainly, before we go further, how common the struggle is, because a man who thinks he is uniquely bad at this will give up, while a man who knows that nearly everyone begins exactly where he is will persevere. The restlessness, the not-knowing, the wandering mind, the temptation to check the time and leave, these are not the marks of a man who is failing at Adoration. They are the universal beginning of it, experienced by nearly everyone who has ever taken it up, including the saints who went on to love it most. Adoration is a skill of the soul, and like any skill it is awkward at first and grows easier with practice. No one is born knowing how to be still before God; everyone learns it, slowly, through exactly the awkward early visits you may be dreading. So take heart. If you have found Adoration difficult, or expect to, you are not the exception. You are the rule, at the ordinary starting line, and the whole point of this book is to walk you forward from there.

CHAPTER ONE

What Adoration Actually Is

Being With the One Who Is There

Before the practical help, a foundation, because understanding what Adoration is dissolves half the difficulty. Most men struggle with Adoration because they misunderstand it as a kind of advanced prayer performance, when it is actually the simplest and most restful thing in the Christian life.

The Presence Makes It Possible

Everything about Eucharistic Adoration rests on the truth taken up in the companion book on the Real Presence: that the Host exposed on the altar is not a symbol of Christ but Christ himself, truly, really, substantially present. If that is true, and it is, then Adoration is not a technique or a mental exercise. It is simply being in the presence of a Person, the way you would sit in the presence of anyone you love. You are not conjuring God's presence by the quality of your prayer; he is already there, fully, on the altar, whether you feel anything or not. This changes everything about the pressure a man feels. You do not have to make anything happen. You do not have to achieve a state or produce an experience. The whole reality, the presence of the living God, is already accomplished

before you say a word. All you have to do is be there, with him, and let that be enough, because it is.

My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. — Exodus 33:14

Being Before Doing

The confusion of the fidgeting man comes from thinking Adoration is something he must do, when it is first of all something he must simply be: present, before the Lord. Consider how this works between people who love each other. Two old friends, or a long-married husband and wife, can sit together in comfortable silence, doing nothing, saying nothing, and the time is not empty but full, full of a presence that needs no activity to justify it. They are not failing at friendship because they are not talking. They are enjoying the deepest form of it, the ease of simply being together. Adoration is this, with God. It is the prayer of being with him, and its essence is presence, not performance. The man who grasps that he does not have to do anything in Adoration, that the whole point is simply to be there with the Lord who is there with him, has grasped the thing that makes Adoration possible, and has been freed from the anxious effort that was ruining it.

The Response of Adoration

The word adoration names the fundamental posture. To adore is to worship, to acknowledge God as God, to give him the reverence and love due to him alone. Before the exposed Host, the right interior posture is exactly this: adoration, the bowing of the soul before the Lord who is present, the recognition that this is God and I am his creature, loved and small before him. This is why Adoration is restful in a way that active prayer is not. It asks less of you and more of you at once: less activity, but a deeper surrender, the surrender of a creature content simply to worship his God, to be in his presence, to love him and be loved, without needing to accomplish anything by it. Adoration is the prayer of the creature who has stopped striving and simply rests in the presence of the One who made him, and there is nothing more natural, or in the end more restful, in all the spiritual life.

An Ancient Instinct

Though the formal practice of Eucharistic Adoration as we know it developed over the centuries of the Church′s life, the instinct behind it is as old as faith itself: the instinct to be in the presence of God, to come to the place where he dwells and simply remain there. The people of Israel treasured the Temple as the dwelling place of God′s presence, and the Psalms are full of the longing to be there, to dwell in the house of the Lord, to gaze upon his beauty, one thing the psalmist asks, to dwell in the Lord′s house all the days of

his life. That longing to be in God's presence finds its fulfillment in the Eucharist, where God dwells among us more intimately than he ever dwelt in the Temple, present not in a cloud over the Ark but really and substantially under the appearance of bread. Eucharistic Adoration is the Christian flowering of that ancient instinct: to come to where God dwells and to be with him. And as belief in the Real Presence deepened and the Church's devotional life developed, the practice of adoring Christ present in the reserved Sacrament grew and spread, until it became one of the most beloved devotions in the Catholic world, treasured by saints and ordinary faithful alike. When you sit before the Blessed Sacrament, you are answering the same longing the psalmist felt, now fully satisfied, for the God whose presence Israel sought is truly here.

CHAPTER TWO

Why the Saints Loved It

The Power of the Practice

If Adoration is so simple, why has it been prized so highly, loved by the saints, credited with such power in the spiritual life? Because simplicity is not the same as shallowness, and the simplest prayer turns out to be among the most transforming.

Transformed by Presence

There is a principle at work in Adoration that the saints understood and that explains its power: we become like what we behold. A man is shaped, slowly and deeply, by what he gazes upon, what he gives his attention to, what he spends time in the presence of. The man who spends his hours before screens full of anxiety and outrage becomes anxious and outraged. The man who spends time, regularly, in the presence of Christ, gazing on him in the Blessed Sacrament, is slowly conformed to Christ, transformed by the presence he keeps. This happens beneath the level of conscious effort, simply through exposure, the way a man's face is warmed by sitting in the sun. To sit before the Eucharist is to place yourself in the presence of God and let that presence work on you, reshape you, calm you, heal you, and over time make you more like the One you behold. The saints loved Adoration because they knew this: that simply being with Christ, regularly and at length, changes a man more deeply than any amount of striving, because it lets God himself do the work.

Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another. — 2 Corinthians 3:18

Rest for the Weary

There is another reason the practice has such power for the modern man in particular. We live exhausted, over-stimulated, our minds never quiet, pulled in a hundred directions, and we do not rest even when we stop, because our idea of rest is more stimulation. Adoration offers a rest of an entirely different kind, the rest of stillness in the presence of God. Christ himself invited the weary to come to him for rest, and Adoration is one of the most direct ways to accept that invitation, to come, physically, into his presence, and simply rest there, laying down the noise and the striving, letting the silence and the presence restore what the frantic world depletes. Men who take up Adoration often find, to their surprise, that the time before the Blessed Sacrament becomes the most restful and restorative part of their week, not because anything happens, but because nothing has to, because for that half hour they are simply with God, at rest, and the deep part of the soul that never gets to stop is finally allowed to.

The Fruit in a Life

Over time, the fruit of regular Adoration shows up throughout a man's life, though he may not connect it to the cause. A greater peace, less easily shaken. A clearer sense of what matters and what does not. A deepening love for Christ that begins to reorder his priorities. A strength in temptation and difficulty that was not there before. These are the ordinary fruits of time spent with God, and they grow quietly in the man who keeps the practice, not because he is working at them but because he is spending time in the presence of the One who produces them. The saints loved Adoration because they saw its fruit, in themselves and in others, and knew that the simple practice of sitting with the Lord was among the most powerful things a soul could do, precisely because it did so little and let God do so much.

A Prayer for the World

There is a dimension of Adoration that lifts it beyond the individual soul and gives it a missionary and even cosmic weight, and it is worth naming because it dignifies the quiet hour a man might otherwise think of as merely private. When a man sits before the Blessed Sacrament, he is not only receiving grace for himself; he is offering worship on behalf of a world that has largely forgotten how to worship, keeping watch on behalf of the many who do not come, interceding in the presence of God for the Church and the world and the people who never darken a chapel door. The saints understood Adoration partly as reparation, a making-up for the neglect and coldness the Eucharistic Lord receives from a world that ignores him, a small act of love offered to console the heart of Christ for the great indifference of so many. And they understood it as intercession of

enormous power, believing that the hours faithful souls spend before the Blessed Sacrament draw down grace on the whole world in ways known only to God. So the man who keeps his quiet hour is not wasting time in private piety while the world's real work goes on elsewhere. He is doing some of the most important work there is, worshiping on behalf of the many, interceding for the world, keeping watch with the Lord whom so many have left alone. There is nothing small about the quiet hour. It reaches further than a man can see.

CHAPTER THREE

Getting Started

The First Visit

Now to the practical, beginning with the simple mechanics of the first visit, because uncertainty about the basics stops many men before they start.

Where and When

Eucharistic Adoration happens in two main forms. In the more solemn form, the Host is exposed in a monstrance on the altar, often in a dedicated adoration chapel, and people come to pray before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, sometimes around the clock in what is called perpetual adoration. But you do not need formal exposition to adore the Eucharist. In every Catholic church, the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle, marked by the burning sanctuary lamp, and Christ is just as truly present there. So you can adore him any time the church is open, simply by going in and sitting before the tabernacle. This means Adoration is far more available than many men realize: any open Catholic church, any time, is a place where you can sit in the presence of the Lord. Find out when your parish church is open, or whether it has an adoration chapel, and simply go. Start with whatever is available and convenient, because the convenient practice is the one you will actually keep.

> *I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord.* — Psalm 122:1

How Long

Do not begin with an hour. The famous question Christ asked in the garden, could you not watch one hour with me, has inspired many to aim at a holy hour, and that is a beautiful goal, but for a man who has never done this and does not know what to do with the time, an hour is daunting and often defeating. Begin with fifteen minutes. Fifteen

minutes is short enough not to intimidate and long enough to be real, and a man who starts with fifteen faithful minutes will grow naturally toward more as he learns what to do with the time. There is no rule that Adoration must last an hour; the saints who kept long hours started somewhere, and the length that matters is the one you will actually keep. Start short. Grow as the practice becomes natural. A regular fifteen minutes will form you far more than an occasional heroic hour that you dread and avoid.

What to Bring

You may bring a few simple aids, especially at the beginning when the silence is hardest. A Bible, to read a passage slowly. This book or another spiritual book, to read a little and ponder. A journal, if you are the kind of man who prays better with a pen. Perhaps a Rosary. These are not distractions from Adoration but supports for it, especially early on, giving your restless mind something to rest on. Over time you may find you bring less, that you want more of the silence and less of the props, but there is no virtue in forcing bare silence before you are ready for it. Bring what helps you stay and stay peacefully. The goal is to be there, with the Lord, and whatever helps you do that, quietly and without distraction, is welcome. As the practice matures, the aids naturally fall away, and you are left with what Adoration always aims at: simply being with him.

CHAPTER FOUR

Now What: The Four Movements

What to Actually Do With the Time

Here is the heart of the book, the direct answer to the question that stops every man: I'm sitting here, now what? There is a simple and time-tested pattern for the time in Adoration, four movements a man can move through, not rigidly but as a natural flow, so that he always has something to do and yet is always moving toward the stillness that is the goal. Think of them as adore, thank, ask, and rest.

A word before we walk through them: these four movements are a helpful pattern, not a rigid liturgy. You do not have to hit them in exact order or give each an equal share of time or complete all four every visit. On one visit you may spend the whole time in thanksgiving; on another, the asking may fill it; on another, you may drop quickly into restful silence and stay there. The four movements are a scaffold for the man who does not know what to do, a reliable answer to the now what question, and as you grow in the practice you will lean on the scaffold less and move more freely. But especially at the beginning, having this pattern in your pocket means you will never again face the blank

panic of the silent chapel, because you will always know there is something good and simple to turn to. Keep the four in mind, use them freely, and let them carry you until the prayer begins to flow on its own.

First, Adore

Begin by doing what the prayer is named for: adore. Turn your attention to the Lord present before you and simply acknowledge him, worship him, tell him you believe he is there and that you have come to be with him. You might make an act of faith, Lord, I believe you are truly here, or pray a few words of worship, or simply gaze at the Host and let the reality settle: this is God, and I am in his presence. Do not rush past this. The whole prayer flows from it. Spend the first few minutes simply recognizing and adoring the One you have come to, letting the awareness of his real presence become vivid, settling into the fact that you are, right now, with God.

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. — Psalm 95:6

Second, Thank

Then give thanks. Move through the things you are grateful for and thank the Lord for them, specifically: the gifts of your life, the people, the mercies, the good you often rush past without acknowledging. Gratitude is one of the most natural and fruitful things to do before the Blessed Sacrament, and it warms and opens the heart, moving you from mere presence into relationship. Let the thanksgiving be personal and particular, not a vague acknowledgment of blessing but a real naming of the specific gifts God has given you, spoken to him directly, in his presence. This movement fills time easily and turns the heart toward love, and it prepares you for what comes next.

Third, Ask

Then ask. Bring to the Lord everything you are carrying: your own needs, the people you love and their needs, the situations that weigh on you, the help you require for the struggles of your life. This is intercession and petition, and there is no better place to make it than in the physical presence of the Lord. Lay it all before him, unhurried, one thing at a time, the burdens and the requests and the people you carry. You are bringing your whole life and everyone in it into the presence of God and placing them before him. This movement, too, fills time naturally, and it is deeply fruitful, because you are not firing petitions into the void but laying them at the feet of the Lord who is truly present and truly listening.

Fourth, Rest

And then, finally, rest. Having adored and thanked and asked, let the words run out, and simply be with him in silence. This is the movement men find hardest and it is the goal of the whole prayer, the point toward which the first three movements lead. Stop talking. Stop doing. Simply rest in his presence, wordless, receptive, still, the way you would rest in comfortable silence with someone you love. You do not have to fill the silence. You do not have to think profound thoughts. You simply remain, present to the One who is present to you, letting his presence be enough. If words or thoughts come, let them; if not, let the silence be. This resting is the deepest part of Adoration, the pure being-with that the saints treasured, and though it is hard for the modern man at first, it becomes, with practice, the most precious part of the time, the still point where a man simply loves and is loved, and needs nothing more.

Move through these four, adore, thank, ask, rest, and you will never again face the blank panic of not knowing what to do. And notice the design: the first three give the restless mind plenty to do, easily filling the time, while gently leading toward the fourth, the stillness that is the aim. You always have something to do, and you are always being drawn toward simply being with him.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Wandering Mind

Distraction and What to Do With It

Every man who takes up Adoration meets the same enemy within the first few minutes: the wandering mind. You settle into the silence intending to be with the Lord, and your thoughts immediately scatter to work, worries, the day's tasks, anything but the prayer. This is universal, it defeats many men, and it need not defeat you, because it is entirely normal and there is a simple way to handle it.

It Is Not Failure

First, understand that a wandering mind is not a sign that you are failing at Adoration or that you are not cut out for it. The mind wanders; it is what minds do, especially the modern mind, trained by a lifetime of stimulation to resist stillness. Even the greatest contemplatives battled distraction constantly and wrote about it at length. So do not be discouraged when your mind wanders in Adoration, and above all do not conclude that the wandering means the prayer is worthless or that you should give up. The wandering

is simply the ordinary condition of a human being learning to be still, and its presence says nothing about the value of your prayer or your fitness for it. Expect it. It is coming. And know in advance that it is not the end of anything.

When my heart was embittered, I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you. Nevertheless, I am continually with you. — Psalm 73:21-23

The Gentle Return

The response to a wandering mind is simple: gently return. When you notice your thoughts have drifted, without frustration and without self-recrimination, simply bring your attention back to the Lord, to the Host before you, to a word of prayer. And then, a minute later, when it drifts again, return again. And again. You will do this many times in a single visit, perhaps constantly, and that is fine, because here is the crucial truth: the repeated, patient return of your attention to God is itself the prayer. Each time you notice you have wandered and gently turn back to the Lord, you make a small act of love, choosing him again over the distraction. A visit to Adoration in which you did nothing but notice you had wandered and return, a hundred times, is not a failed visit; it is a visit spent making a hundred small acts of love, a hundred choices for God, and it may please him more than a visit that felt effortlessly serene. Do not fight the wandering with frustration. Simply return, gently, as many times as it takes, and let even the returning be your prayer.

Using the Aids

When the wandering is severe, use the aids we spoke of. If you cannot settle into silence, read a passage of Scripture slowly and ponder it, or pray a Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament, or read a little from a spiritual book and think about it in the Lord's presence. There is no shame in this; giving the restless mind something to hold is a legitimate and time-honored way to pray in Adoration, especially when the pure silence is too much. The aim is to be with the Lord peacefully, and if a slow reading or a Rosary helps you do that when bare silence would only mean twenty minutes of distraction, then use it. As the practice matures, you will need the aids less, but at any stage they are there to help you stay, present and peaceful, before the Lord. Use whatever keeps you there and keeps you turned, however imperfectly, toward him.

CHAPTER SIX

From Talking to Listening

Learning the Deeper Silence

As a man grows in Adoration, something shifts. In the beginning, the prayer is mostly his own activity, adoring, thanking, asking, filling the time with his words and thoughts. But over time, if he keeps the practice, he is drawn toward something deeper and quieter: from talking to listening, and finally to a wordless resting that is the summit of the prayer.

Making Room to Listen

Most of our prayer is talking: we say things to God, we ask, we praise, we pour out words. This is good, but it is not the whole of prayer, and a relationship that is all talking and no listening is incomplete. Adoration is the natural place to learn to listen, because its silence and stillness make room for it. As you grow more comfortable in the silence, deliberately make room to listen: having spoken to the Lord, fall silent, and simply be attentive, receptive, waiting on him. This does not usually mean hearing words; God's speaking is mostly quieter than that, a gentle movement of the heart, a settling of peace, a subtle drawing, an insight that rises in the stillness. To listen is to make yourself available to this, to stop filling the silence with your own words and instead wait, open, for whatever the Lord wishes to give. The companion book in this library on listening to God develops this at length; Adoration is one of the best places to practice it, because the presence is so real and the silence so available.

Bringing the Real You

One of the great graces of learning to listen in Adoration is that a man can bring the real weight of his life into the silence and let the Lord meet him in it. The decision he cannot resolve, the relationship that is breaking, the fear he tells no one, the sin he keeps returning to, the direction he cannot discern: all of it can be carried into the presence of the Lord and simply held there, in the silence, before him. A man does not always get answers in words, but something happens in the holding, in laying the real burden before the real presence of Christ and waiting with it there. Clarity often comes, not as a voice but as a settling, a peace about one path and an unease about another, the quiet movements the book on discernment in this library describes. Burdens grow lighter for being laid down before him. And a man who makes a habit of bringing his actual life into Adoration, rather than only saying pious words there, finds that the practice becomes the place where his real decisions get made and his real weights get carried, in the company of the Lord who alone can bear them with him. Do not leave the real you at the chapel door. Bring the whole of it in, and lay it before him, and listen.

Be still, and know that I am God. — Psalm 46:10

The Prayer of Simple Presence

Beyond even listening lies the deepest form of Adoration, which the tradition sometimes calls the prayer of simple regard or the prayer of simple presence: a wordless, thoughtless, loving gaze upon the Lord, in which a man simply is with God, loving him, being loved, without words or thoughts or activity of any kind. This is what a saint captured in the famous account of the peasant who, asked what he did during his long hours before the tabernacle, answered simply, I look at him and he looks at me. That is the summit of Adoration, and it is not complicated, only deep: two who love each other, gazing at one another in silence, content simply to be together. A man cannot force this; it is a gift, given over time to those who keep the practice faithfully. But he can dispose himself for it, by keeping the silence, by not rushing to fill every moment with activity, by learning to rest in the presence. And when it comes, even in brief moments, he tastes what the saints tasted, and understands why they loved this prayer above almost all others: because in it, a man simply looks at God, and God looks at him, and nothing more is needed, or wanted, or possible.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Dry Visits

When You Feel Nothing

A man who takes up Adoration will have visits, many of them, when he feels nothing at all: no peace, no consolation, no sense of God's presence, just a dry stretch of time before a Host that seems silent and a God who seems absent. This is one of the most important experiences to understand rightly, because misunderstood, it drives men away from the very prayer that would most benefit them.

Feeling Is Not the Measure

The first thing to understand is that what you feel in Adoration is almost entirely beside the point. Christ is truly, really present on that altar whether you feel his presence or not; your feelings do not create his presence and their absence does not diminish it. The reality of Adoration, being with the living God, is fully accomplished the moment you are there, regardless of your emotional state. So a dry visit in which you felt nothing is not a wasted visit or a failed one; it is a visit in which you were, in fact, in the real presence of God, exactly as much as on the visit that felt full of consolation. The feeling is weather;

the presence is the sun, there behind the clouds whether you see it or not. Do not measure Adoration by what you feel. Measure it by the fact of where you were and who was there, which does not change with your mood.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. — John 20:29

The Gift of Dryness

The saints go further and insist that the dry visits are often more valuable than the consoling ones, and understanding why frees a man from the tyranny of seeking good feelings. When Adoration feels wonderful, it is easy to wonder whether a man loves the good feelings or loves God. When Adoration is dry, and a man comes anyway, and stays anyway, and gives the Lord his time anyway, receiving nothing in return but the bare knowledge that he was with him, then his love is being purified, taught to seek God rather than God's consolations, to love the Giver rather than the gifts. The dry visit, faithfully kept, is an act of pure love, a man saying by his presence, I am here because you are here, not because it feels good, but because you are worth my time whether I feel anything or not. This is a deeper love than the consolations produce, and God, who is forming that love in a man, often withdraws the feelings precisely to grow it. So when the dryness comes, do not flee it. Receive it as the gift it secretly is, keep coming, keep staying, and let your love be purified into the real thing, which loves God for himself and not for what he makes you feel.

Faithfulness Through the Dryness

The practical counsel, then, is simple: keep the practice through the dry stretches, and do not let the absence of feeling talk you into quitting. Show up. Stay your fifteen minutes or your half hour. Do the four movements, or read, or simply endure the silence, and offer the Lord the dry time as a gift. The dryness will pass, as all weather passes, and the consolations will return in their season, and in the meantime the faithful keeping of the dry visits is doing a deeper work in you than the consoling ones ever could. Faithfulness, not feeling, is the measure of Adoration as of all prayer, and the man who keeps coming when it is dry is the man in whom Adoration does its deepest work.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Building It Into a Life

The Practical Rule

Adoration changes a man only if it becomes a regular part of his life rather than an occasional experiment. Here is how to build it in.

A Regular Commitment

The key to Adoration, as to all prayer, is regularity: a fixed commitment, repeated, rather than an occasional visit when the mood strikes. Decide on a rhythm you can actually keep. Perhaps a weekly holy hour, or half hour, at a set time. Perhaps a stop at the parish church a few times a week on the way home from work, even for ten minutes before the tabernacle. Perhaps a committed hour in a perpetual adoration chapel, which many parishes have, where you can sign up for a regular weekly slot, and where the commitment to a fixed hour, with others counting on you to keep it, helps a man stay faithful. Whatever the rhythm, make it regular and make it realistic, and attach it to a fixed point in your week so that it is not left to mood or memory. The man who visits the Blessed Sacrament regularly, at a set time, week after week, is the man in whom Adoration bears its fruit.

So, could you not watch with me one hour? — Matthew 26:40

Consider a Committed Hour

For the man ready to go deeper, consider committing to a regular weekly holy hour, especially in a perpetual adoration chapel if your area has one. There is a particular grace in the hour, in the very commitment to watch with the Lord for the length of time he asked of his sleeping apostles in the garden. The hour, which seemed daunting to the beginner, becomes, to the man who has learned what to do with the time, not long enough, and many men who commit to a weekly holy hour come to regard it as the anchor of their entire spiritual life, the fixed point around which everything else is ordered. If your parish or a nearby one has perpetual adoration and needs adorers to commit to hours, consider whether God is asking you to take one. It is one of the most fruitful commitments a man can make, and the chapels always need faithful men to keep the hours, so that in taking one you both receive a great grace and render a real service, ensuring that the Lord is never left alone.

Going Together

Though Adoration is deeply personal, there is great value in taking it up alongside other men, and it connects naturally to a men's formation group. A group of men who commit together to a regular holy hour, or who close a gathering with time before the Blessed Sacrament, strengthen one another in a practice that is easy to neglect alone, and they discover that the silence shared with brothers has its own power, each man drawn deeper

by the seriousness of the others. For an Acts of the Apostles group, a shared holy hour can become one of the most formative things the men do together, precisely because it is not talk or study but simply time spent together in the presence of the Lord, being formed by him in silence. And a man who has come to love Adoration becomes, quietly, an evangelist for it, bringing a friend along, introducing another man to the practice that has meant so much to him, and thereby handing on one of the great treasures of the faith. Consider whether your own taking-up of Adoration might become something you do with other men, and something you invite others into, so that the grace you have received is multiplied and the chapels are filled with men who have learned, together, to watch one hour with the Lord.

Let It Anchor You

Whatever form it takes, let Adoration become an anchor in your life, a fixed and regular return to the physical presence of the Lord, a still point in a turning week. In a life that is loud and scattered and exhausting, the regular hour or half hour of silence before the Blessed Sacrament becomes a place of return, of rest, of reorientation, where a man lays down the noise and remembers who God is and who he himself is before God. Over months and years, this regular return works on a man deeply, conforming him to the Christ he beholds, steadying him, deepening his love, and becoming, often, the most precious and important time of his week. Build it in, keep it faithfully, and let it become what it became for the saints: not a duty, but the thing a man would not give up, the regular, treasured time spent simply being with the God who is always there, always waiting, always glad that he came.

CONCLUSION

He Looks at You, and You Look at Him

Return to the man in the chapel, sitting in the silence, hitting the question that stops everyone: I'm sitting here, now what? This book has been the answer, and the answer, in the end, is simpler than he feared. He does not have to do anything impressive. He has only to be there, with the Lord who is truly there, and to let that be enough. He can adore, and thank, and ask, and rest. He can read a little, or pray a Rosary, or sit in silence. He can return his wandering mind a hundred times and call each return an act of love. He can keep coming when it is dry and offer the dry time as a gift. And over time, if he keeps

the practice, he will be drawn into the deepest thing of all, the wordless gaze in which he simply looks at the Lord and the Lord looks at him.

That is Eucharistic Adoration, and it is not for spiritual athletes or mystics only. It is for the ordinary man, the restless, distracted, exhausted, ordinary man, who is invited to come and sit in the presence of his God and simply be with him. The Lord is there, on the altar, in the tabernacle, waiting, at this hour, in a chapel near your home. He is not waiting for you to perform. He is waiting for you to come, and to stay a while, and to be with him. That is all Adoration asks, and it is everything.

So go. Find the chapel or the open church, and sit down before the Lord, and do not be stopped by the old question, because now you know the answer. You are sitting there with God. That is the point, and it is enough. Adore him, thank him, bring him your life, and then simply rest in his presence, and let him look at you while you look at him. Begin with fifteen minutes. Keep coming. And discover, as the saints discovered, that the simplest prayer of all, just being with the Lord who is truly present, is among the deepest and most transforming things a man can do.

He is there. He is waiting. And when you sit down before him and wonder what to do, remember the peasant's answer, which is the whole of it: I look at him, and he looks at me. Go and look at him. He has been looking at you, and waiting, all along.

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