

COME AND REST AWHILE

A Guide to Praying with Jesus Present in

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



COMPILED BY WOMEN RELIGIOUS
IN THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

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If you were raised Catholic, you're likely familiar with the tabernacle in your parish church and that special red candle burning next to it, a symbol of the Real Presence. Perhaps you have experienced that feeling of walking into a church and just knowing that there's a presence there though you may be the only human being in the space. You may have prayed a holy hour with a large group for a particular intention, your prayer time ending with Benediction. Or perhaps you have found an adoration chapel where Jesus waits and welcomes all comers at whatever time they appear.

Or perhaps all of those situations are brand new to you. Maybe you've recently discovered the Catholic faith and are still trying to understand what we mean by "Real Presence". Maybe you've been away from the practice of your faith for some time, and your memory of prayer and the mystery of the Eucharist is a little fuzzy. Perhaps you're a young person who has been to a holy hour once or twice with your family. Maybe you've never been. You may be wondering, what is all this about? What is it that one does exactly when one goes to pray a holy hour, or visit the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle of a Catholic church?

Saint John Vianney, the famous 19th century "Cure of Ars," once answered that question simply: "I look at him and he looks at me."

And in the words of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the 18th century moral theologian and Doctor of the Church, "You will gain more in a quarter of an hour of prayer in the presence of the Sacrament than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day."



WHAT IS ADORATION?

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is an extension of the moment in the Mass when the priest shows the consecrated host to the congregation and says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a devotional tradition that focuses our attention on the mystery of Jesus’ true, Real Presence in the Eucharist. It deepens our hunger for Communion with Christ.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION

Reserving the Blessed Sacrament for devotion and for distribution to the dying has its roots in the early centuries of the church. But it wasn’t until the 13th century that public devotions became more accepted thanks to the promotion by Saint Francis of Assisi and his followers. Around the same time, Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of Corpus Christi, and commissioned Saint Thomas Aquinas to compose prayers and hymns for the feast still in use today. The traditional “Tantum Ergo,” “O Salutaris Hostia” and “Panis Angelicus” were all composed by Aquinas and form the melodies of today’s Benediction services.

In 1592, Pope Clement VIII promoted the Forty Hours devotion, which began as a local practice in Milan. St. John Neumann would popularize the practice in the United States in the 1850s. In the 20th century, Pope Saint John Paul II is credited with a revival of eucharistic devotion, including perpetual adoration chapels.

Here we present a small collection of prayers, thoughts and methods of meditation for use in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. These prayers have been contributed by several communities of religious women who serve in the Diocese of Arlington. These prayers are part of the prayer traditions of the communities as noted. We pray that these “prayers of the heart” aid you in your own heartfelt prayers.

PRAYERS FOR THE BEGINNING/ CONCLUSION OF A HOLY HOUR

Prayer to Beloved Jesus

Poor Sisters of Saint Joseph

Beloved Jesus, most present in the Blessed Sacrament, before you I come, aware of my littleness, kneeling before your Greatness. O sweet Jesus, with you I desire to be; in your heart I long to rest.

Grant me the graces to praise you, and adore you, and love you. May I love you with all my heart, with all my mind and all my strength. For you are Kindness and Love and Ever-present.

What can I give you if all is yours?

Accept my life as an offering pleasing to you. I place before you all my days, all of my actions, thoughts, memories and desires.

O my sweet, most merciful Jesus, only in you is found my comfort; only in you is found my peace. Grant I may always seek you, and in seeking you know you, and in knowing you love you. *Amen.*

Prayer Before Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) written by Saint Thomas Aquinas

Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia

O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of his passion is recalled; the soul is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given us.

V: You have given them bread from heaven.

R: Containing all manner of sweetness.

Let us pray. O God, who has left us in this wonderful sacrament a perpetual memorial of your passion, grant us, we beseech you, so to reverence the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may ever find in our souls the fruit of your redemption, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayer Before Liturgy of the Hours

Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist

O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine,
all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.
Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, Furnace of Divine Love
grant peace to the world.

We adore you most holy Lord Jesus Christ,
here and in all your churches throughout the world,
and we bless you, because by your Holy Cross
you have redeemed the world. *Amen.*

Prayer to Begin Eucharistic Adoration

by Blessed James Alberione, founder of the Daughters of St. Paul

May this time of Eucharistic Adoration be
the meeting of our soul and of all our being with Jesus.

May it be the creature meeting its Creator;
the disciple before the Divine Master;
the patient with the Doctor of souls;
the poor appealing to the Rich One;
the thirsty drinking at the Font;
the weak presenting themselves to the Almighty;
the tempted seeking a sure Refuge;
the blind searching for the Light;
the friend who goes to the true Friend;
the lost sheep sought by the Divine Shepherd;
the heart led astray who finds the Way;
the foolish who finds Wisdom;
the bride who finds the Spouse of the soul;
the nothing who finds the All;
the afflicted who finds the Consoler;
the youth who finds life's meaning. *Amen.*

You Are the Life

by Blessed James Alberione, founder of the Daughters of St. Paul

Jesus, Divine Master, we adore you as the only begotten Son of God, come on the earth to give life, the most abundant life to humanity. We thank you because by dying on the cross, you merited life for us, which you give us in Baptism and nourish in the Eucharist and in the other sacraments. Live in us, O Jesus, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that we may love you with our whole mind, strength and heart, and love our neighbor as ourselves for love of you. Increase charity in us, so that one day, called from the sepulcher to the glorious life, we may be united with you in the eternal happiness of heaven. *Amen.*

Prayer at the Conclusion of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

May the Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored and loved at every moment in all the tabernacles of the world even until the end of time. *Amen.*

WAYS TO PRAY DURING A HOLY HOUR

Excerpt from Visits to the Blessed Sacrament by Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

O Eternal Word, having become man, you were not content simply to die for us. You have also given us this Sacrament as company, as food, and as a pledge of paradise. You make yourself appear among us, first as a child in a stable, then as a poor man in a workshop, then as a criminal on a cross and now as bread on an altar. Tell me, could you invent more ways of gaining our love? ... Lord, I do not wish to live if not to love you alone. ... My beloved Redeemer, you have spent all your life for me. And what have I to love, if not you who are all beautiful, all kind, all good, all loving, all gracious. My soul lives only to love you. ... Just to hear the words "crib," "cross," "sacrament," lights up my spirit with a desire to do great things for you.

Method of Meditation acc. to Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

1. Make an act of faith and humility. Ask God for light, and ask Mary, Saint Joseph and your guardian angel to be with you.

2. Read a few verses from Scripture (or Saint Alphonsus' *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*) and reflect on what the passage means, what you learn from it.
3. Pray for the grace to love God and to tell him so! Speak familiarly with God as you would with a friend. Pray for the graces you most need in this moment, for your daily life and for your spiritual journey.
4. Make one practical resolution that you can carry out today.
5. Thank God for the graces you have received. Close your prayer with a prayer to Our Lady.

Method of Meditation -- A.C.T.S.

Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia

A — Adoration. Praise God for his majesty, power and glory.

C — Contrition. Ask forgiveness for your moments of weakness and beg him for strength.

T — Thanksgiving. Count your blessings and thank the Lord for each one.

S — Supplication. Ask God for things needed by you, your loved ones and the world.

Last step: Ask God questions and listen for his answer in your heart.

Stay with Me, Lord (Prayer of Saint Padre Pio after Communion)

Poor Clares

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have you present so that I do not forget you. You know how easily I abandon you.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need your strength, that I may not fall so often. Stay with me, Lord, for you are my life, and without you, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for you are my light, and without you, I am in darkness. Stay with me, Lord, to show me your will. Stay with me, Lord so that I hear your voice and follow you.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love you very much, and always be in your company. Stay with me, Lord, if you wish me to be faithful to you.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for you, a nest of love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close, and life passes; death, judgment, eternity approaches. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way, and for that, I need you. It is getting late and death approaches, I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O, how I need you, my Jesus, in this night of exile! Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers. I need you.

Let me recognize you as your disciples did at the breaking of the bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the Light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to you, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus. I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not merit it, but the gift of your Presence, oh yes, I ask this of you!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is you alone I look for—your Love, your Grace, your Will, your Heart, your Spirit—because I love you and ask no other reward but to love you more and more.

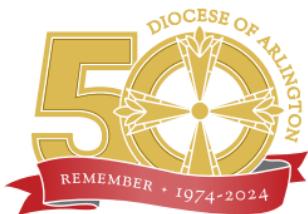
With a firm love, I will love you with all my heart while on earth and continue to love you perfectly during all eternity.
Amen.

Meditations and Prayer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

1. I gaze lovingly at my God Who gazes lovingly at me. (*in silence and wonder*)
2. I gaze. I adore. I listen.
3. Soul of Christ be my sanctification,
Body of Christ be my salvation.
Blood of Christ fill all my veins,
Water from Christ's side, wash out my stains.
Passion of Christ my comfort be.
O good Jesus listen to me!
In your wounds I feign would hide,
Never to be parted from your side.
Guard me should my foe assail me,
Call me when my life shall fail me.
Bid me come to thee above,
With the saints to sing your love.
4. Suscipe:
Receive me, O God, as you have promised and I shall live
And disappoint me not in my hope. (from Psalm 119)

Made in commemoration of the
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Sources:

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