

How We Worship

by Peter Kreeft
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When was the last time you saw an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?

Why has devotion to the Blessed Sacrament declined exactly now, when there is greater need than ever before, now that we are engaged in full-scale cultural and spiritual warfare?

There are three main answers to this question.

First, people have less time. Leisure is a concept that is rapidly going the way of the concept of "chastity." As our technological time-saving devices multiply, we are increasingly becoming enslaved to them, and to the people and forces that control them. It is genuinely harder today to take an hour for adoration than it ever was in the past. This fact alone proves that we are in serious decline.

Second, the sense of adoration is also in decline. The very experience of awe, wonder, and worship "the sense of the holy" - that is the psychological origin of all religion, seems to be absent in most Americans, Christian as well as secular, Catholics as well as Protestants. The category of 'the holy' is disappearing because the experience of 'the holy' is disappearing.

A third reason for the decline of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is even more simple and shocking: a decline of faith in it.

Theological orthodoxy and intellectual faith are not sufficient, but they are necessary. Unless we believe that Christ is true, we cannot believe in Christ.

Unless we believe that Christ is present in the sacrament, we cannot adore Him there, or feed off His Body.

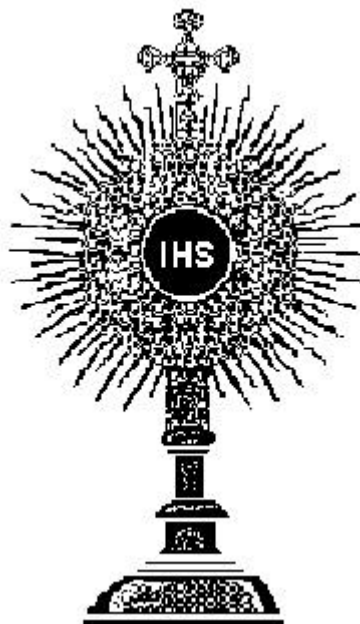
Very great healing could come from the restoration of adoration, by restoration of the practice of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

However, the fundamental reason for this adoration must not be anything practical and extrinsic. It is just and right to worship God: that is the reason for it. God must be adored not to win cultural battles, or even to restore orthodoxy, but simply because He deserves to be adored.

If we did this, four wonderful results would follow.

First, it would teach us to listen, and to be quiet, and to take time again. Perhaps even to ponder and contemplate, like Mary.

Second, it would teach us



to time-travel, to transcend the present: to go back to the time of Christ's first coming,

to become contemporary with Christ, to walk in His steps; and to go forward to the time of His second coming. The end of the world, the Second Coming and the Last Judgment are not more than 100 years away for anyone reading this article; for YOUR end is your meeting with Him who judges and ends time at THE end.

Third, you will learn to adore by doing it. Adoration is like virtue: you learn only by practice.

Adoration is the essence of religion. When you adore, you know why religion is the most intense fire in human history - it is the opposite of boring. And it reveals your own deep heart at the same time as it reveals God's; you meet and come to know Him and yourself only together.

Fourth, it will teach you realism, to live in the real world, not a subjective fantasy world of slogans and ideologies. It will teach you the realism of faith. God is the basic fact. Adoration is the basic response. Sanity is essentially responding to fact.

When we adore, we plunge into the center of the hurricane, 'the still point of the turning world'; we plug into infinite dynamism and power. Adoration is more powerful for construction than nuclear bombs for destruction.

And it's only as far as our nearest Church.