



---

### Conference 3 | The Value of Eucharistic Adoration

(0:20) In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We adore you most Holy Lord Jesus Christ here and in all the churches of the whole world. And we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world. Have mercy on us. Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

As you remember our theme is **“Be imitators of me as much as I am an imitator of Christ,”** the words that come from St Paul, First Corinthians Chapter 11 Verse 1. Words that come from St. Paul. And so we continue with that theme as we reflect upon the great gift that Fulton Sheen, soon to be Blessed Fulton Sheen, left us. And his whole purpose for fulfilling that promise that he made on the day of his ordination, that he would make a continuous holy hour each day of his life in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. So let’s continue to talk about some of the reasons that he chose to do this.

(1:29) And one is -- he said it was not out of *compelled* love, but rather it was out of *filial* love that he made this promise to our Lord. It was out of devotion, it was out of piety. **And that’s what we also do when we make a time to visit the Blessed Sacrament. And what we do is we choose to spend time with our Beloved.** Think about a couple when they first meet each other. And there’s this attraction and they start to become very fond of each other and as time goes on they start to fall in love with each other. And you can ask any couple -- I’m sure if you’re a married person you’ll understand this and understand it well -- you just count the minutes that you could see your Beloved as you start to fall in love with your Beloved, whether it’s your husband or your wife. And that becomes the same with our Lord. The more we fall in love with Him, right, this beautiful loving devotion we have to him, the more we want to spend time with Him. Because that’s what it is. And just remember that **time with our Lord is never time wasted.** It’s always time well-spent. And what it does also for us is it helps us to guard against a sort of activism that we can have in our lives. My motto is **“Be doers of the Word but not simply hearers deluding yourselves,”** as St. James says. And sometimes that can be taken in a sense of a kind of activism -- like our faith is constant, constant, constant, active. Remember that Jesus asks for that time spent with Him. It comes from in the Garden of Gethsemane. So He just simply wants us to set aside time and spend time with Him. And with prayer what we do is spend time with Him, spend time with our Beloved.

(3:28) Jesus asks for time spent with Him, and He asks not to simply be doing things for Him. **In other words, the hour is meant to foster relationship with Jesus Christ simply by being with one another.** And listen to these words that come from Fulton Sheen: he said, “The purpose of the Holy Hour is to encourage a deep personal encounter with Christ, the holy and glorious God that is constantly inviting us to come to Him, to hold converse with Him, to ask for such things as we need, and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him. **When we are first ordained,”** speaking of his own ordination, **“it is easy to give self entirely to Christ,** for the Lord fills us with sweetness just as a mother gives candy to her baby to encourage her child to take the first step. This exhilaration, however, does not last long. We quickly learn the cost of discipleship, which means leaving nets and boats and counting tables. The honeymoon soon ends and so does our self-importance and at first hearing the stirring title of Father.” So think about that in relationship to your own life. May you’ve had a revert -- you reverted back to the Catholic faith and you’ve come back and you’re completely on fire for the Lord. And that’s that honeymoon period where we want to do anything and everything for the Lord. But if we’re not careful as time goes on that flame can start to become extinguished. **Well, how do we keep**



**that flame stirred fire within our soul? We do so by spending time with our Beloved.** It's just, as I said, like a couple -- spouses coming together. How do they continue to enkindle that love that they have for one another, not allowing it to go out? It is by spending time with their Beloved. So think about a couple who sadly -- maybe they're married, they've been married for a number of years -- and unfortunately their marriage starts to fall apart. And if you ask them the reason -- "Well, why is it that you started to do this?" "Well, the children moved away and it seemed like all we had in common were the children;" or, "We just stopped having similar interests;" "We stopped spending time with one another;" these different things. And all of that has to do with not enkindling that love, spending time with one another. And that's what happens with our relationship with Jesus. If we're not careful what can happen is the flame can start to go out. If we are too preoccupied with things of the world, weariness of the world. That's important for us to remember especially during this time.

(6:18) Because it is particularly important when we are stressed or anguished, anxious or tired, or lonely or angry or afraid. It's particularly important, for **meditation keeps us from seeking an external escape from our worries or our miseries.** And I'd say that we have had this on steroids during the pandemic, which we continue to be in the middle of. Who knows when we'll come out of it. But to be near our Lord can allow us to overcome these things. What drives our fear but perfect love? Who is perfect love but Jesus? God alone is love. God is perfect love. It can be difficult also during the pandemic in order for us to spend time with our Lord. Maybe some of our churches are closed, the hours are restricted, adoration chapels are perhaps even closed, or they limit the number of people that are able to go into them. And one of my good friends -- he's a pastor up in Carmel, Indiana -- they were very clever -- and I know other parishes have done this too -- but they were very clever. What they would have is Eucharistic Adoration from cars. And so the parish, beautiful windows in the front, they would do exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and people would come and sit in their cars and make their holy hour. So even if they're not at the Exposition you can go in your car and you can sit outside the church knowing that the Lord is near, that He's present to us in the Blessed Sacrament.

(7:53) So we see all sorts of difficulty. **The daily hour, what it reminds us of doing, is it reminds us of whom we serve and why.** It places us in His very presence each day and it helps us to draw strength from that fountain. This allowed Fulton Sheen to say this about the Holy Hour: "It will restore our lost spiritual vitality. Our hearts will be where our joys are." So on the other hand those who make the holy hour, he also says, Sheen says this: **the Holy Hour, quite apart from all its positive spiritual benefits, kept my feet from wandering too far, being tethered to a tabernacle, one's rope for finding other pastures is not so long.** The dim tabernacle lamp, however pale and faint, had some mysterious luminosity to darken the brightness of bright lights. The Holy Hour became like an oxygen tank to revive the breath of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the foul and fetid atmosphere of the world. Even when it seems so unprofitable and lacking in spiritual intimacy I still had the sensation of being at least like a dog at the master's door, ready in case he called." So, that image of being tethered to the tabernacle keeps us from wandering far from Jesus. You know, making that time with Him.

(9:22) Just recently I was mentioning this to a friend. We were kind of talking about this image and he asked me, "What's a tetherball? What does that mean?" And so I said, "Have you ever seen the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*?" He said, "Yeah, I have." "You know the scene where Napoleon's out there playing that game, the ball swinging around the pole in the middle? You see," I go, "that's tetherball." And you know, you think -- the closer and closer the more it winds, the closer it gets to the good stuff. We want to be like that ball, tethered to our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament, closely wound to Him. The more time we spend with Him, the closer we become with Him. And also talking about that



image of the tabernacle. If you've ever had the opportunity to read *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh. If you haven't, I highly recommend it. It's a great book. There's a lot of darkness in there but the thing I love about it -- there's a bit of a bookend in the book. From the very beginning to the end -- this is not a spoiler alert -- and what it is is the light; it's the sanctuary lamp, to show us that Christ is present in the tabernacle. So in the midst of all of this darkness, all these difficulties, trials. That even in the midst of all these things -- how difficult, arduous life can be -- that Christ is always there. Christ is always present to us. And so we can look for those opportunities to spend time with our Lord. It's always a good thing. Again, it's never time wasted.

(10:57) He also said that a daily hour of time for our Lord, it's an hour of companionship. And it keeps us from wandering far from Christ. And what it does also is it keeps us rooted in His Truth. And Jesus identifies himself as "the way and the truth and the light," right? So he's Truth personified. And this leads us to what Archbishop Fulton Sheen said for the third reason of his Holy Hour, he said was this: "The third reason for the holy hour is to grow more and more into His likeness. As Paul puts it, **'We are transfigured into His likeness from splendor to splendor.'** **We become like that which we gaze upon. Looking into a sunset the face takes on a golden glow.** Looking at the Eucharistic Lord for an hour transforms the heart in a mysterious way as the face of Moses was transformed after his companionship with God on the mountain. Something happens to us similar to that which happened to the disciples on Emmaus. On Easter Sunday afternoon when the Lord met them He asked why they were so gloomy. After spending time in His presence and hearing again the secret of spirituality: the Son of Man must suffer to enter into His glory. Their time with Him ended, and their hearts were on fire." So sometimes we have a sense that our hearts are not on fire and perhaps our faith has grown cool. And so how do we light that fire again? Simply put, by spending time with our Lord.

(12:33) And when we encounter Our Lord in the Eucharist, remember this: it's a guaranteed encounter with the living Christ. How do we know that? Jesus says that "my body's true food, my blood is true drink. Take and eat, take and drink. This is my body. This is my blood." He doesn't say "figuratively" but he really means it. This is it, body, blood, soul, and divinity. Christ is present. So that time with Him is never time wasted. So the companionship of the hour, what it does is it transforms us, transforms us. And it makes us like Him. We remember He said, "Come and see and behold." An old prayer to the Sacred Heart is this: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, make our hearts like unto thine." Or, I like to use a shorter one, a little easier one for me: **"Jesus, humble of heart, make my heart like yours."** Implicitly, that is what we ask when we come in to make a Holy Hour, even if we are not conscious of it. **For what we do is we step into the presence of God and we ask Him, among other petitions, to make us like unto Him.** Remember the famous words of St. Augustine: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee, O Lord." And where else can we rest in Him but rest in His presence? So we can take away this restlessness we might have in our daily lives because of all the things that are competing for our attention, all the obligations that we have, all the worries we have, perhaps deadlines we have -- these different things. To go before the Lord those things simply melt away. And all it is is simply a Beloved, "with the one who loves."

(12:25) So through the holy hour what we can do is we can rest in Him and we can be for Him and continually be transformed into a more perfect of His likeness, all by bathing in the Son, S-o-n. All by bathing in the Son each and every day. Even to the point that what happens is our weaknesses and our temptations become lessened. That's one of the benefits of Eucharistic Adoration too. We become more like the one we claim to be our Lord Jesus Christ, and we become less like the one that has these selfish inclinations, right, these temptations that we might find ourselves giving into. So he said this: **"The virus**



---

**of our sins cannot long exist in the face of the light of the world. Our sinful impulses are prevented from rising through the barrier erected each day through the Holy Hour. Our will becomes disposed to goodness with little conscious effort on our part.**” So think about the virus -- that’s something that we’ve talked about for the last year. And it seems that we have spoken about it ad nauseum. And what are we all looking for? We’re looking for immunity. We’re looking for a vaccine. Well the virus of our sins: that can be taken care of by our vaccine, our immunity -- by spending time with our Lord. We become more and more like the one whom we profess to be our Lord by simply spending time with Him.

(15:55) So for these reasons Sheen thus called the holy hour the “hour of truth.” We’re alone with Jesus. “We there see ourselves not as people see us -- as always judging us to be better or worse than we truly are -- but we are seen as *He* sees us, as Jesus Christ, who is the just judge, sees us.” It is important to remember that as well. It’s important because **what happens when we make the Holy Hour [is] our worldview starts to change. And what also happens is this mundane sixty minutes -- it’s transformed into a cherished meeting between friends**, right: “No longer call you slaves for a slave does not know what his master is about. I call you friend,” as Jesus said. And what do friends want to do? Friends want to spend time with each other, even to the point that sometimes we reach a point where we just don’t want it to end. Again, time melts away and we simply just spend time with our Beloved.

(17:00) He said this: “At the end of our Holy Hour our eyes are open, veils are lifted. We are conscious of His presence. The tabernacle is a ‘Thou’ place. The real presence is more like Easter than the Mass. The sacrifice of the Mass principally but not exclusively centers on Calvary. **The sacramental presence is related principally but not exclusively to Easter, when Christ appeared only to those who knew Him in some way -- to Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, St. John and all the disciples -- but he never appears to Pilate, Herod, Judas or Caiphas. The extra presence is only for friends who want to become better friends.** He bids us, ‘Remain the hour.’ And at the end we hate to leave, for our hearts are still with Him.” Beautiful, beautiful words. He only appeared to those who were His friends. He didn't appear to His persecutors but only to his friends.

(18:00) So lots and lots of other reasons why Fulton Sheen talked about making the Holy Hour, but what I want to focus on in these last moments that we have in this conference is **what the Church teaches us about the Eucharist**, the true presence of the Eucharist. And I don’t think we can do enough in showing love, devotion and reverence for Our Lord present in the Eucharist. And I don’t think, especially as clergy, that we can talk enough about it, and give what the Church teaches us, precisely teaches us.

Now the definitive document from the Second Vatican Council on the liturgy is called *Sacro Sanctum Concilium*. Beautifully written document, and I highly recommend that everyone read it. It’s not just simply for those who celebrate the Mass. It’s not simply for those who are in academic studies of the liturgy and things like that. But it’s for everyone. It’s intended for everyone. *Sacro Sanctum Concilium*. You can find it on the internet. You can read it for free. What the document says is that when we enter into the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass there are four ways we encounter the living Christ. First of all, it says we encounter the living Christ in the assembly of people who are gathered, the body gathered. And how do we know that? We know that because Jesus said, **“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I gathered in their midst.”** So we take our Lord’s words and we know that when we gather for the Mass. What do we do? We don’t gather in our own name but we gather in the name of Jesus. We’re His disciples so we know He is in our midst.



(19:42) The second way in which Jesus is present is He is present when the Word is proclaimed. And that's I think most obvious to us, when the Gospel is proclaimed, because in the Gospel when we stand we hear the words and the deeds of Jesus. But all Scripture is inspired by God. And so we also encounter the living Christ and the Word. Remember the famous line from St. Jerome: **"Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Jesus Christ."** We flip that around and knowledge of the Scriptures is knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Church says that at Mass when the words are proclaimed we encounter the living Christ.

(20:21) The third way in which He is present is the Church's minister. As established, we know that because the Church's minister is conformed to Jesus Christ the eternal high priest, right? And we know that at the Last Supper, where we have the institution of the Eucharist and we also have the institution of the priesthood. And so that's established at the Last Supper. And when Jesus says to them to **"do this in remembrance of me."** Now, "remembrance of me"-- there's so much. It's such a loaded term. It really means that Christ is truly present. But also He says, *"Do this."* In other words He's telling His disciples, He's telling the apostles, his closest followers, to continue this until the end of time. And so when they do this and Jesus makes them the first priest, they do this "in remembrance of me." And Jesus Christ is truly present and they don't act on their own accord but they act on the accord of Christ. And we would say that they act in the person of Christ the head -- *in persona Christi capitis* -- person of Christ the head. Because they preside over the Body, as Jesus did. So they act in the person of Christ the head. And another term that we might use would be one of *alter Christus* -- that they would be another Christ. And because they're conformed to Jesus Christ the eternal high priest.

How do we know that? We know that the words that really signal us to that are within the liturgy when the priest will say, "Take and eat. This *is* my body." Now, he could say, "Take this and eat. This is the body of Jesus." Would be true. But he's not called to do that because at that moment he is acting in the person of Christ the head. "Take and eat. This is *my* body." Speaking in *persona Christi capitis, in alter Christus*. "Take and drink. This is my blood." And so when you hear the priest say those words, not to puff himself up, but really they are the words of humility. When we hear those words we say, "Ah!" And it's another way in which we encounter Christ. So in assembly, when "two or three are gathered in my name"; the Word -- words proclaimed, inspired Scripture by God; and then in the person of Christ.

(22:44) The final one, though -- and this is where the Church in *Sacro Sanctum Concilium* uses a bit of elevated language -- is in the presence of the Eucharist. And what the Church says is this: that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist *par excellence*. And I think sometimes when we say we elevate something, I think in kind of our American sensibility, we might say okay it's downplaying something else. But that's not at all it. The Church says Christ is present in the Word, Christ is present in the minister, Christ is present in the Body; but she elevates some language where she says Christ is present *par excellence* in the Eucharist. And the reason for that is Christ is present, *substantially* present, in the Eucharist. He's present body, blood, soul and divinity.

Now how do we know that? And how is it that we can prove that? Well I'd say first of all we know that from John's Gospel, Chapter 6. That's the Bread of Life discourse. And that's where Jesus uses the technique in Scripture where he says over and over and over and over again emphasizing the point: **"My body is true food. My blood is true drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has my very own life within them. And I will raise them on the last day."** And even at the end when people have difficulty with those words -- this is a hard saying -- and many go away. Jesus even questions His closest followers, "Are you going to go away too?" "To whom shall we go?" St. Peter says. "You have the words





of spirit and life." You have the words that are true. And the words that you share with us, although difficult and hard to completely comprehend -- we believe them. Because these words come from your lips. So we know that because they come from the lips of our Lord. And that Jesus didn't say, "My body is *like* food. My blood is *like* drink." He said, "My body is true food. My blood is true drink." And then we move forward into the Last Supper where He said, "Take and eat. Take and drink." **He transforms the Passover into this new covenant with His very life, His very own flesh, which will be offered upon the cross.** And then we move forward into the letters, the epistles of the New Testament. And we hear St. Paul even say that on that night Jesus took bread and broke it and said, "This is my body." On that night He took the cup filled with the wine and He said, "This is my blood." And so we see the tradition being carried on and St. Paul even talking about that this is something that should continue.

(25:31) We know that Christ is present in the Eucharist, truly present. And one of the ways that we are able to describe that is through the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. **St. Thomas Aquinas taught us that we come to see the change that takes place at Mass, the change of the bread and wine that are brought forward at Mass from not simply bread and wine but into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. And he referred to it as transubstantiation. In other words, trans -- change -- substantiation: change of the substance.** Now Thomas said that what happens at Mass when we pray the epiclesis -- the prayer of the Holy Spirit coming down -- when we speak the words of institution -- the words that our Lord spoke at the Last Supper. He said what happens is the substance is changed but the accidents remain the same. So accidents are more of our descriptive words. So if we take the host, it's flat and, we can feel, a little grainy. Perhaps white, off-white -- different things. We can take a look at the wine. Obviously it's wet -- we can feel that. Might be a reddish color. All these things -- it's a liquid -- we can talk about all these *accidents* of the bread and the wine. But when we talk about the substance, the substance is what it *is*. And so if it's bread at one time and it's wine at one time and the substance is changed -- transubstantiation -- it is changed into body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus because He said, "This is my body. This is my blood." And what remains are the accidents. That's why it looks the exact same. That's why it feels the exact same. That's why it tastes the exact same. These are simple accidents. But what it truly is is it changes from bread and wine into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. So to be very clear on that.

(27:36) I think that's a fairly easy teaching. I used to do that with our third graders and I would go into their class when I was pastor in Phoenix and teach them about transubstantiation. And the kids -- they got it better than anyone else. And I would say, "Now go home and teach your family this." And I would walk through the parking lot after school one day, and parents would come up to me and say, "My child came home and taught me about transubstantiation and I was blown away *and* I didn't know that." **So out of the mouth of babes, the wisdom that can come out of the mouth babes. So if they can comprehend it we can all comprehend it. Even more importantly, we can share it with people.** So if we invite somebody to Mass with us, what we can do is maybe we can say, "That is truly the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus." "Well how do you know?" "Well we know because of our Lord's words in John Chapter 6; we know of our Lord's words at the Last Supper; we know of our Lord's words from St. Paul in his epistles. We know all these things. And then they'll say, "Well it looks the same." "Well okay, because those are the accidents. Those are simply the accidents. But what it truly is -- the substance -- is it becomes the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. And what a true blessing that is for us."

(28:52) So friends hopefully my words inspired you to want to spend more time with our Lord. And when you receive our Lord, to receive Him worthily and to receive Him with a great amount of love, affection and devotion and especially respect. Because He is truly present to us. He wants to come to us.



---

He wants to impart his life in us. And He wants us to come to Him. And He wants us to spend time with Him, to bathe in the rays of the Son, the S-o-n. So that we can be more like the one we claim to be our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we are grateful for the gift of your body, blood, soul and divinity, present to us in the Eucharist. We pray that we have a greater reverence and faith in you and your words that you share with us in John's Gospel, Chapter 6. We pray also for courageous hearts to be able to share this truth with others. We make all these things in your name, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.