

THE HOLY HOUR

In a previous column, I wrote about the priority of prayer in the life of a Christian, and how we would be “Christians at risk,” if we had only a superficial or shallow prayer life. That’s because regular prayer helps to remind us of the truths of our faith and the reality of our utter dependence on God. To keep a discipline of prayer, a recommended and common practice for priests and religious is to make a daily holy hour, by spending an hour each day in private, silent prayer, in order to maintain the soul’s focus on God. In addition to all the people who request meetings and appointments with us each day, surely God also deserves an appointment with us for an hour of our undivided attention.

This practice of a daily holy hour of prayer is not practical or possible for most members of the lay faithful, due to the demands of work and family life. But a good goal for everyone is to make a holy hour at least once a week, so that there’s a regular time for the soul to focus on God, in addition to the hour of prayer at Mass each Sunday. The holy hour is a way to keep the soul tethered to God, so that it doesn’t float away after all the other demands for its attention.

To provide an opportunity for this weekly time of prayer, beginning in October, we will hold a weekly Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration each Wednesday evening, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. here in St. Julie’s Church. Of course, we will have to observe the same virus safety precautions of spacing in seating and wearing of masks.

But, why Adoration? Why spend this time of prayer in the presence of the Eucharist exposed on the altar? Well, we believe that the Eucharist is the Real Body and Blood of Christ, as a result of the consecration that happens at Mass, and that means it’s the Real Presence of God on earth. This means that the Eucharist is the closest we can get to Heaven here on earth, and so, it deserves our devotion, our reverence, and our adoration.

When we adore something, we look upon it with attention and focus, and we express our love and affection. And that’s what we do during Eucharistic Adoration, when we gaze upon the Real Presence of God on earth, and express our faith and love for Him. A weekly Holy Hour of Adoration allows us to give God the honor and praise He deserves, to implore His mercy and blessings upon our parish, and to reflect quietly on our lives in the presence of the One who knows everything about us and who can give us insights and consolations. Adoration helps to exercise the soul’s natural yearning for God. And during this weekly holy hour, confessions will still be heard between Exposition and Benediction.

There are so many parish activities that we still cannot hold due to the virus restrictions. So, my thinking is, we should do more of what we *can* do, which includes time spent peacefully and prayerfully before Our Lord and Savior in the Most Blessed Sacrament.