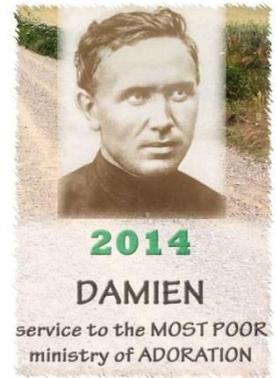


Adoration is a work (Const 53.4)

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A couple praying in
San Cristóbal de las Casas
Chiapas - Mexico

***Fear not,
in those solitary conversations,
talking of your miseries,
of your fears,
of your aggravation,
of the people you love,
of your projects
and of your hopes;
do it confidently
and with an open heart.***

Good Father

We were making a visit to a group of brothers, where the majority works in parishes. We asked all the brothers how they exercised their ministry of adoration. We asked them specifically if they spent at least a half hour each day in silent prayer before the Eucharist.

Almost everyone told us that they didn't have time. Pastoral work absorbs them. They pray with the people during liturgical celebrations. Some pray the office (alone or with the religious community) and take time to meditate on the readings that they will be preaching on. In some parishes the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and there are times of adoration, but the brothers appear only at the beginning and end to expose or repose the Eucharist. In some communities there is communal adoration once a month, or even once a week. But individual adoration each day, almost no one does it.

I believe it's the same thing in the whole Congregation, in the brothers' branch. The great majority does not put time aside each day for adoration before the Eucharist.

During our visits, the General Government is always repeating the same message: individual adoration daily is a ministry which is part of our mission, our apostolate, our work. It wouldn't occur to anyone not to show up for the Mass that he is to preside at, or at a meeting of catechists that he called, or in the class that he has to teach. These things are on our daily calendar because they are our responsibility and we can't leave the people stranded. If we don't show up, we are embarrassed and we ask forgiveness.

Individual adoration every day is another daily obligation, like those just mentioned. As the last General Chapter reminds us (Mission 38) adoration is a ministry to which we have been called. It is the kind of service that is hidden and unseen and no one is going to reproach me if I don't do it, but it is a ministry like others that "we owe" to God's people. When we don't do it, we are mistaken in our service and negligent as regards what the Church has a right to expect of us.

During the visit that I referred to at the beginning, many Christians came to greet us after celebrations in the parishes and chapels staffed by our brothers. In that brief moment of shaking hands, hugging and being hugged, sharing smiles and words of thanks, many people asked us for a blessing to alleviate their suffering: a serious illness, a son with a health problem or malformation, a daughter who had run away, someone out of work, another who was recently widowed, a huge number of people being lonely, abandoned, miserable...The weight of the world's pain is overwhelming. I thought of what the Gospel says of Jesus, that all those who had some kind of illness drew near to touch him (cf. Mk 6:55-56) and the heartbreaking call of Isaiah, "Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God." (Is. 40:1)

A brother, who celebrates Mass each weekend in a detention center for minors, where he has heard heartrending stories of damaged lives, told us that when he returns from the center, he comes back with a lot of "material" for his personal adoration.

That's exactly it. It's our task to gather together all that suffering of people and present it before the Lord in adoration. Our adoration is "reparative." We implore the Lord that he save his people, that he bless his inheritance, that he heal broken hearts, that he console the afflicted, that he forgive the sin that is the source of such evil, and that his Kingdom come. In his "Counsels on Adoration," the Good Father calls us to bear our own pain and that of the world, and present them to Jesus Christ.¹

In adoration we become brothers to all humanity, we bear their pain and we bring it to Jesus. He'll know what to do with it.

In adoration we also present our brothers in community: those we sincerely like as well as those whom it is difficult to accept. We have all been damaged by life in one way or another. We are destroyed by blows along the way. We all need the repairing love of Jesus. Our relationships with our brothers need it also. Personal adoration daily is the hidden workshop where our fraternity is formed.

Jesus is the only Redeemer and Savior. After celebrating the Eucharist, we prolong his mysterious work of redemption in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. There, our silent physical presence, as religious consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, unites us mysteriously and really to the redemptive dynamism of the love of Jesus for the Father and for the world. (cf. Const 5).

Individual daily Eucharistic adoration forms part of the things "that we have to do" in carrying out our mission. We owe it to those with whom we work in ministry. We owe it to those we visit when they are sick, those we help when they are in need, those we form and those we love. We also owe it to our brothers and sisters in the Congregation. We owe it to all of humanity that we may not know but whose pain, searching, sin and goodness we hear about.

¹ *The adorer must adore with Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, make reparation first for herself and for all the sins committed in the whole universe, implore the conversion of sinners, the propagation of the faith, pray for the Church militant and for the Church suffering, but above all she must make an entire gift of herself to the Heart of Jesus...*

Therefore do not be afraid in these one on one talks to speak of your misery, your fears, your troubles, of those who are dear to you, of your plans and of your hopes. Do it confidently with an open heart.

Only God saves. It would be pretentious on our part to think that our pastoral work is the best contribution that can be made to the cause of Jesus Christ. Our efforts are not what save. Nor do our intentions, however good they might seem, always agree with the heart of Jesus. Everything remains small, bland and useless, if not accompanied by adoration where we implore God's mercy on all of creation and where we expose ourselves to the purifying fire of his gaze.

Adoration is a duty of love. Love for the people whom we serve. Love for the brothers. Love for Jesus, who is our soul friend and Lord of our lives. As an exercise of love, adoration is able to change us from within, to help us configure our heart to Christ's, to make us more merciful, kinder with the brothers, firmer in our commitment.

There are many works and charisms in the Church. Because we are inspired by the ss.cc. charism, one of our works is Eucharistic adoration: every day, each one of us, always. Let's do it and...see what happens.

