



Five novice masters inviting to adoration

JUST DO IT!

*Pat Fanning ssc**

The Nike slogan says "JUST DO IT!" It is a phrase I have taken to heart in relation to adoration. Like any type of prayer, we can find a million **excuses** to not do it. If we don't enter into adoration, we are in effect "divorcing" ourselves not only from the Lord, but from our Founders and St. Damien. It is an **essential element of our charism** given to our community from the beginning, given in the midst of suffering and persecution. Who would deny that suffering continues in our day? So we have to get rid of the excuses... I don't have time... God never responds... I'll do it tomorrow... why waste time doing nothing, even if it is in front of the Blessed Sacrament... why pray, when work can be my prayer...

Adoration is placing into the hands of the Lord all of the joys and troubles of our world... exactly where they belong. It is loving God and others first, which is the essence of the **Sacred Heart**. It is a turning to the Father in trust, and uniting with His Son, at the prompting of the Spirit.

In some ways, we want a "scheduled rule" in terms of adoration, but if we look at the founders writings and practice, we find a wisdom in not setting up too many rules, but rather allowing the brother and sister to discover the value of adoration as they practice it throughout their own particular spiritual journey. Now, granted there have been attempts to "legislate" that we adore for a half hour, the numbers needed for "perpetual" adoration (which I will deal with at the end of this written reflection), etc.

One of the things I stress with the novices is that adoration is not something I only do when it is convenient, or something I'll do when I can. Rather it is truly **entering into life with the power of the Eucharist**, in opposing that which starves the poor, strips the defenceless of their dignity, and makes light of the deep values passed on to us as religious of the Congregation. Adoration, as it was for the Founder, the Foundress, and Damien, is a positive force to engage those who would ignore Jesus or treat Him with contempt. Our adoration brings us to a greater awareness of Him in those we meet, which calls us to actively love God when the world treats God and His complete gift of self with absolute contempt. It makes us aware of the needs outside of our own self-interest. So the Founders could see the great need for education of the poorest children, and Damien could see his brother and sister lepers with greater clarity in their living out the crucified life of Christ in the many agonies they endured.

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If we, as members of the Congregation, do not enter into adoration and reparation, we are engaged in a denial that Christ's total gift of Himself at the table in the Upper Room, and at the crucifixion, extends over time. The Body and Blood we adore is not just a onetime event. The celebration of the Eucharist and prayerful adoration is not something that we discuss and then go to our rooms and forget. Eucharist is not "a nice Liturgy well celebrated". As our predecessors knew, it extends throughout our day. It is worship of **God's complete gift of Himself** to us for the forgiveness of sins. The communities call is to worship Jesus present in the Eucharist and to extend that worship throughout our daily lives. In turning to the Father with Jesus, we are saying who we are. Our adoration is to profess that we believe in God's love for us, in us, and through us, for all time. We recognize God's presence in us, and in all of our brothers and sisters. We extend the practice of our adoration by serving God in all whom we meet.

So perhaps here are a few things to do if you haven't been in practice for a bit:

1. **Start Small** - If you haven't been practicing, start small. Begin with 5 minutes a day as an offering, and ask God to bless your attempt.
2. **Increase over time** - Gradually increase your time commitment daily. Be realistic, and don't belittle your efforts God sees your intention, and blesses it.
3. **Be regular** - there is nothing better in exercise, study, music, etc. than to do it every day, at the same time. Pick a time, and stick to it. If you miss, don't deride yourself, and begin again. You don't lose muscle overnight if you forget to exercise, and you certainly won't lose your relationship with God if you don't do adoration for a day.
4. **Be brave and steadfast**- the temptation in your life by the evil one is very real. Your greatest temptation will be used against you. When attacked, go to the Sacred Hearts... they love you. Oh and don't worry about falling asleep. God knows what you need. If you do, you are resting in God's heart. End of story.
5. **Encourage others** - your example is very important in the encouragement of your brother and sister in their prayer life. What you do, even frail as it might be, speaks volumes.
6. **Finally, read, study, and discuss in community what adoration means.** We waste a great deal of time on frivolous activities, but hesitate to spend time with the Lord.

Some sources you might want to take a look at again:

- a. Juan Vicente González Carrera, ssc "Father Coudrin, Mother Aymer and Their Community", (English edition 2012, SSCC Indonesia Publishing House)
 - Part III, Chapter III: "Principle Practices", n. 1 "Perpetual Adoration" (1795).

- Part IV, Chapter V: "Perpetual Adoration in the Faith of the Community".

<http://www.sccpicpus.com/en/foundational-epoch>

- b. Anthony Hulselmans, sccc, "***A historical account of the preliminary chapter of the Rule of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts***", in "Études Picpuciennes" n° 1 (English translation 1961, Fairhaven). Particularly Good Father's advice (counsels) to the Sisters on Adoration.

<http://www.sccpicpus.com/en/picpus-studies>

- c. Jean Yves Kerrien, sccc "***Our Spirituality***" (Section on Adoration)

<http://www.sccpicpus.com/en/consacration-to-the-sccc>

- d. Research on the internet... It is amazing how encouraged you can become when you go to the internet prayerfully.

It might be helpful to visualize that somewhere on the planet there is a brother and sister in adoration. **Perpetual adoration** is happening in the Congregation, not just in one room or geographic location. Our distance from one another does not allow us to observe this, but God certainly does. Remember the request of Pope Francis on December 10th, 2013, to pray for an end to hunger, asking for people in different time zones to pray at 12 noon, and you get the idea. And remember that this observance began in Tonga! Perhaps we could have a sign-up on our international webpage to state when we as individuals adore. We may be wonderfully surprised at the result. Since our adoration enables us to unite ourselves to Christ, as He offers Himself to the Father, it provides us with a truly unique opportunity to glimpse, in our adoration, what is at the heart of what really matters. And what could have been more real to our Founders and St. Damien, than the Eucharist and Adoration - the heart of what matters.