



# Adoremus Jesum

Volume 9

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## THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

*The Feast of the Body of Christ*  
by Dorothy A. Smith

The first four Sundays after Pentecost are celebrated as devotional feasts of Our Lord. They are Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi Sunday, Sacred Heart Sunday and Christ the King Sunday.

The Catholic Church has celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi for seven hundred and forty years. Its origin lies in the thirteenth century when, in 1208, Blessed Juliana of Cornillon had a repeated mystic experience. Juliana, a devout, Augustinian nun with a life long devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, experienced the presence of God in a vision, more than once, but could find no meaning in them. She shared the details with her superior. She too was void of an explanation for the vision of a full moon with one spot of darkness.

A few years later she experienced an internal message which explained the vision. Accordingly, the moon represented the Church. The dark spot represented something that was preventing the brightness to shine in full. The message spoke of a need for a great feast to honor the Body of Christ.

Many years later Juliana shared the vision, the meaning and the message with Jacques Pantaleon, the Archbishop of her hometown, Liege, Belgium. He eventually became Pope Urban IV and wasted no time establishing the new liturgical feast of Corpus Christi. The first celebration was in 1264, six years after the death of Juliana. Pope Clement V mandated the decree to the Universal Church in 1314.

Pope Urban IV also called upon the Dominican scholar, Thomas Aquinas to create the liturgy, prayers and hymns fitting for the Feast. His works are considered a masterpiece of Catholic Liturgy. They are prayed and sung at Mass, Benediction, adoration, and in Processions of the Blessed Sacrament.

The next time you participate in these celebrations let your mind and heart recall the profound contributions of three people who adored the Body of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament: Blessed Juliana who experienced and shared her mystic visions; Pope Urban IV who used the gifts of the Holy Spirit to decree the Feast of Corpus Christi; and St. Thomas Aquinas, the unsurpassed poet of all ages, who gave the Church, and us, the most beautiful verses of praise and adoration of the Body of Christ.

### FAMILIAR HYMNS BY ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

**Panis Angelicus**

**O Salutaris Hostia**

**Tantum Ergo**



### Tantum Ergo Sacramentum

**Down in adoration falling,  
Lo! The sacred Host we hail;  
Lo! O'er ancient forms departing,  
Newer rites of grace prevail;  
Faith for all defects supplying,  
Where the feeble senses fail.**

**To the everlasting Father,  
And the Son who reigns on high,  
With the Holy Ghost proceeding  
Forth from each eternally,  
Be salvation, honor blessing,  
Might and endless majesty! Amen.**

#### Resources:

*In The Presence of Our Lord, The History, Theology and Psychology of Eucharistic Adoration* by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. and James Monti, Huntington, IN.: Sunday Visitor Pub., 1997.  
*Praying In The Presence of The Lord with St. Thomas Aquinas* by Mike Aquilina, Huntington, IN.: Sunday Visitor Pub., 2002.

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

### *Fruitful action arises out of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*

By Archbishop Thomas Collins,  
Edmonton, Canada



We can pray anywhere and at any time. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, conscious of the indwelling presence of the Blessed Trinity, and though we can wander from God, God is never far from us.

The Lord tells us to go into our private room to pray, and that can mean either a quiet prayer place where our audience is not an admiring crowd but God alone, or it can mean as well our own inner self, into which we can enter at any time (Matthew 6:6). But there is one setting for prayer which is marvelously blessed: prayer in the presence of the Holy Eucharist. It is there that we most directly encounter the mystery of the Eucharistic presence of Our Lord, and where we continue through contemplation our participation in the Mass.

The Holy Eucharist is reserved in the tabernacle primarily so that communion may be brought to the sick. But long ago Christians realized that prayer before the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle is a privileged experience in which we become profoundly conscious of the mystery of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. In the light of that, all of our daily cares and all of our vain pretensions are put into perspective.

Just after my ordination as a priest, I wrote to Bishop Fulton Sheen to thank him for having written *Those Mysterious Priests*, in which he advocates a daily Holy Hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. He wrote back, and said that the faith we need to recognize the Risen Lord in the Holy Eucharist is the same faith the disciples needed to recognize God in the Risen Lord. So true.

When I was a young priest studying in Rome I would walk in the afternoon to a church where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Into that haven of peace came numerous Christians young and old, mostly young, bringing their cares to a place of silent adoration

of Our Eucharistic Lord. Back into their busy lives they went, energized in their discipleship.

There is nothing passive in Eucharistic Adoration; it is a font of activity, and it leads us to fuller participation in the true centre of our life as Christians, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, especially if we spend our time in adoration praying over the biblical texts used at Mass. There is nothing individualistic in Eucharistic Adoration, for we come before the Lord as members of the family of faith, linked to them through Baptism and through the celebration of the Eucharist.

In the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist we seek the light to see our world and its needs, to judge the issues we face according to the values of the Gospel, and to act decisively as disciples of Jesus. Truly fruitful apostolic action arises out of adoration. We must know who we are and who Jesus is before we can know what to do.

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Archbishop Thomas Collins, Edmonton, Canada*

### LET US PRAY

*Joseph Kolecki, an adorer, shares his prayers:*

- "Oh my Jesus, wholly and entirely present in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, open our hearts, and those of people throughout the world, to accept and receive Your Grace, Your Mercy and Your Love. Merciful Jesus, I ask this of you in Your most Holy Name. Amen."
- "...as I receive Communion and when I genuflect: Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All! Perfect fulfillment of my every desire!"
- "...at times of extreme temptation: Heavenly Father, I claim the Blood of Jesus and the sword of Michael the Archangel!"

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