

International Conference on Eucharistic Adoration in Rome

The following is the shortened text of an interview with Father Florian Racine, founder of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist in the Diocese of Fréjus-Toulon, France. Fr Racine is the principal organiser of Adoratio 2011, an International Conference on Eucharistic Adoration to be held in Rome from 20-23 June 2011. Christine McCarthy, Australia's National Convenor of the Society for Eucharistic Adoration, will be presenting a workshop at this conference.

A contingent from Australia is currently being organised to attend the conference. Those interested in joining this group can contact the Society for Eucharistic Adoration by email: contact_at_seadoration.org or by mail: 142 Victoria Street, Ashfield, NSW 2131. Registrations for the Conference can also be made via the following website: www.adoratio2011.com

Father Racine, you are one of the organisers of the International Conference on the Eucharist which will take place in June 2011. Why is this conference of importance to the Church at this time?

As we know, Pope John Paul II asked the Church to be committed to the "New Evangelisation". One of the aims of this conference is to help to anchor this in the Eucharist, centre, source and summit of all evangelisation (cf Vatican II).

To speak of the "New Evangelisation" has become fashionable in recent times but we must be attentive to the risk of simply copying the "Evangelicals" in their methods of evangelisation. Without calling into question a certain effectiveness of their practices, we mustn't forget that for us Catholics, the source of divine life and thus missionary fruitfulness is found in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

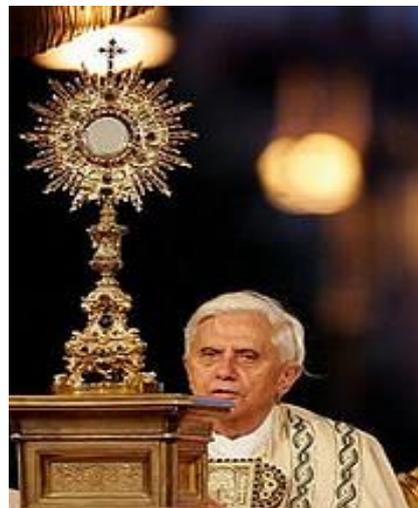
As Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "An authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church. We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us" (1 Jn 1:3).

Numerous speakers have been announced for this international conference, and curiously, the range of topics is extremely broad since they cover everything from the mission, to the religious life, to the commitment to the poorest of the poor. Why such a broad range of subjects in order to speak of the Eucharist?

The different themes were chosen with the intention of showing the central role of the Eucharist in all aspects of ecclesial life. The speakers will help us to

reflect on the particular role of adoration for evangelisation, while situating adoration always in relation to its intrinsic connection to the Mass.

We will see how adoration is important in the formation of priests, how it renews parishes and dioceses, how it nourishes consecrated life, without of course forgetting its direct link with charity and the explicit proclamation of the Gospel.



When a person commits himself or herself to adore for one hour per week, do you understand that to be a participation in the mission of the Church?

We cannot judge what happens in hearts. However we can acknowledge the difference between the two following approaches: to come to adore when I have a bit of time, after I have done all my personal activities and if I feel like it and to come to adore faithfully every week, choosing to consecrate a

specific hour to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

This second approach commits me to the Church. I don't go first of all to present my personal intentions, but rather I am sent on mission by the pastor, to carry the world, to intercede in the name of all the people of the world. I am interceding for the sick, for those who are making important decisions, for those at home, at work, on the road. In short, I am there, I am a presence of the Church before the Lord in the name of all the others.

In a dream Saint Don Bosco once learned that in order to face the storms which come our way we must be attached to three pillars: the Church, the Eucharist and Marian devotion. Is Eucharistic Adoration a lifeline for the Church in this time of storms and purification, especially in the West?

Jesus says: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). The more Christian communities are united to Christ the more they are purified by the Father and made fruitful by the Spirit. The Eucharist is the Sacrament which brings about this communion between God and us. Eucharistic Adoration renews our union with God. We see that Christians, Catholics, want to pray, but we also observe that it is so difficult to pray at home because of all the distractions.

Going before the Blessed Sacrament helps us. Being face-to-face with Jesus in the Sacred Host leads us also to a heart-to-heart with Him. Jesus became flesh 2,000 years ago to unite Himself to us. The Eucharist prolongs His Incarnation. He is there in the Eucharist so as to become one with us and in order to give us a new heart and a new spirit.

To remain silent before the Blessed Sacrament may appear difficult. But Jesus is the easiest person to encounter, to love, to visit. Also what is proper to spiritual combat is perseverance. We must not adore for our own sakes or to receive sensible consolations. We must go to meet our Creator, our God and find our joy in this encounter even if we don't "feel" anything. In this way our adoration is more pure because it leaves everything up to God.

On the conference website, the first phrase is one taken from Pope John Paul II in which he says: "In order to evangelise the world, we need experts in celebration, adoration and contemplation of the Holy Eucharist." In what way is Eucharistic Adoration missionary?

It is missionary in so far as, to borrow again two verbs of Benedict XVI, Eucharistic Adoration permits me to "prolong" and "intensify" that which is celebrated at the Mass. It permits me to live intensely the grace of the Eucharist which "makes the Church" and which makes the Church grow. The more I live from the Eucharist, the more I love the

Church and the more I commit myself to the mission the Church proposes to me.

The theme of the conference is: "From Adoration to Evangelisation". Adoration pushes the adorer to "let go" and let the Lord act more powerfully through him, thus entering into a renewed trust in Him. Does this mean that the New Evangelisation requires us to let go of our own personal visions in order to enter into a new vision, ever renewed by the Spirit ?

Yes, the contemplation of the face of Christ helps me to re-centre my life on Him. Before the Blessed Sacrament I am led to say, like the young Samuel: "Speak Lord your servant is listening" and not "Listen Lord your servant is speaking"! It is a school of silence in which I let Jesus speak to my heart.

In adoration, I listen and discover the will of God for me. In fact, I receive not only the understanding of His will but also the grace to accomplish it in my life. Too often Christians have the tendency to become absorbed by many different works, which in themselves are good, but which remain inspired by their own will and not the will of the Lord. The Eucharist de-centres me from myself in order to re-centre me on Christ and His Word.

You are the organiser of this conference as the founder of the "Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist". What do you believe to be the charism that you have been given to serve the Universal Church?

We are available to help the pastors or bishops organise times of permanent adoration in their parishes or dioceses. Following on from the desire of Pope Benedict XVI (*Sacramentum Caritatis*) to see emerging places of continuous adoration, Cardinal Hummes, in a document from the Congregation for the Clergy in 2007, asked that there be established at least one place of perpetual adoration in each diocese or large town, in order to obtain the following graces: the sanctification of the clergy, to make reparation for the faults of the clergy and also for new vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Cardinal speaks of a grace of "spiritual maternity" for a community which adores the Blessed Sacrament day and night. Jesus is the Bridegroom and the adoring community becomes the Bride. In this divine marriage sealed in the New Covenant of the Eucharist, the community gives birth to vocations for the Church. In other words vocations are obtained on our knees before the Blessed Sacrament.

So we try to help Christian communities organise a continuous adoration. During the course of a weekend of preaching we invite the parishioners to commit themselves to a weekly hour of adoration. Then we form a little team of organisers who

oversee the replacement of adorers who will be absent and the maintenance of adoration over time.

Do you have an example of a place of perpetual adoration which has born fruit in vocations to the priesthood and religious life?

With our help Bishop Marc Aillet, of the Diocese of Bayonne, recently established two places of perpetual adoration in his diocese, one in Bayonne, the other in Pau. He said to the adorers in these two chapels that thanks to their prayer the Lord had given the diocese around fifteen new seminarians. Bishops in the United States give similar testimonies.

As the founder of the Missi onaries of the Most Holy Eucharist, which is a new clerical association established by Bishop Rey of the diocese of Fréjus-Toulon on the 17 July 2007, how have you seen the Lord act in these past few years ?

The Lord has acted in letting us exist and grow. We have four seminarians, a deacon and three priests, with a team of lay people who also participate in our missions. Every time we are invited to a parish we are always astonished to see how well, in spite of the difficulties, things get organised and continue to endure over time. There is always a little sign from the Virgin Mary. She prepares these missions and helps us to accomplish them. We are convinced that Mary invites her children to come to adore Her Son present in the Eucharist.

How can parishes be renewed by Eucharistic Adoration?

This renewal is brought about through the numerous fruits and graces of Eucharistic Adoration, but first of all there is a grace of unity. Eucharistic Adoration unites the different parish realities. We also observe the grace of vocations. Occasionally there are people who enter the priesthood or the religious life but very frequently there are lay people who commit themselves to the parish with much generosity.

Adoration renews zeal for the Mass and for Sacramental Confession. In praying before the Blessed Sacrament, adorers receive the divine light which illuminates the conscience so as to better live the sacramental life of the Church.

A pastor once gave a testimony on how adoration nourishes and fortifies the faith of his parishioners: "The Lord has always answered the prayers of the adorers and He continues to do so. The Chapel of Adoration has been a true 'foyer of prayer' for several years. Our Christian community is filled. I believe that perpetual adoration is the most noble and yet the most easy accomplishment of my life as a priest.

"The benefits are so numerous and the effort is so minimal on my part. The best thing I can do for my parishioners is to help them grow spiritually ... Perpetual adoration makes Jesus present at all times, for each and every person. He is really there in person for each one of us."

And you personally, how has Eucharistic Adoration changed your life?

I studied to be an engineer in Paris and then I went over to Texas. During a trip to Mexico, in front of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I received my call to become a priest. I returned to Houston where I was working at the time and there I met a lady who desired to have perpetual adoration in her parish. At the end of each Mass, she would approach a different parishioner to speak to him or her about the infinite love of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a thing but a Person! The Eucharist is a Heart which loves us and which has thirst to be loved by us in return.

I began to participate in Adoration over there and I discovered the grace of permanent adoration.

For us also, in perpetual adoration there is always somebody before the Lord, in an uninterrupted chain of prayer and intercession, so that the whole heart of the parish is unceasingly raised up to the Lord. And God will give the total victory to His People, the Church: that is to say His light and mercy will scatter the darkness in our hearts and in our world. That is the reason why I chose to commit myself to this mission.