

PRAYER IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Father James Chelich

Dear Friends,

I invite and encourage you to stop by the Church during the noon hour for a moment of prayer. I especially invite parents who may be visiting the school, dropping off or picking up their children. I also encourage Aquinas College students and our own students at Saint Thomas School use this opportunity. You do not have to spend a great deal of time. Simply come for a moment and open your heart to the love present for you in Jesus.

Father Jim

***Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome,
and I will refresh you. Matthew 11:28***

Come to Jesus! This is the essential dynamic of Christian faith. Come to Jesus, he will open your eyes to see miracle after miracle of God's love and goodness around you. Come to Jesus, he will open your ears to wisdom, deep and of profound sense, but unheard in the world. Come to Jesus, he will open your heart to compassion and to a tenderness toward life you never felt before. Come to Jesus, and you will discover your soul. He will show you the true character of a man or woman. He will make you capable of living life with depth, fullness and against an infinite horizon of hope.

Come to Jesus! In our prayer and worship we must never tire of exercising this dramatic movement of heart. This is what our Noon Hour of Prayer is all about. It is an opportunity for us to realize the fundamental dynamic of our faith.

Why pray in the presence of the Sacrament?

Because it is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus. Because Jesus is really present, body and blood, soul and divinity, under the appearance of the Eucharistic bread.

We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in Holy Communion at Mass so that, in obedience to his word and command (see Matthew 26:26-28), he may live in us and we in him (see John 6:55-56; 17:22-23).

The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

John 6:56

We pray in the presence of the Sacrament to fully “realize” what we receive in Holy Communion at Mass.

As we pray before the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus **we realize who we truly are**: “flesh and blood” of the Lord, “kin” to God. We are this by grace, by the gracious gift of God's self to us in Jesus and by the gracious gift of Jesus' self to us in his body and blood. As we sit in reflection before the Sacrament, the Lord speaks to our heart a powerful word of affirmation: “You are good enough, beautiful enough, talented enough, and valuable enough to be flesh and blood of God.” In Christ Jesus, you are a flesh-and-blood, noble son or beautiful daughter of God! (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:17-23; Ephesians 4:14-16; John 15:1-8).

You, then, are the body of Christ.

Every one of you is a member of it! 1 Corinthians 12:27

As we pray before the Sacrament **we also realize who our neighbor truly is**: they are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood in the Lord. The deeper we allow this meditation to penetrate our awareness, the more we find our racial fears and ethnic prejudice confronted. Racial and ethnic hatred is attacked at its root within us and is replaced with a profound realization: if this Eucharistic Bread that we receive in Holy Communion is really and literally the transubstantiated body and blood of Christ, then those who receive it with me, whatever their race or nationality, are really and literally my flesh-and-blood brothers and sisters! (Ephesians 2:13-18) We are flesh of the same body (of Christ); and the same blood (of Christ) flows in our veins.

There is no Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, foreigner, slave or freeman. Rather, Christ is everything in all of you.
Colossians 3:11

As we pray before the Sacrament **we realize a new reason and motive to forgive** those who have injured us, to reconcile with those with whom we are estranged, and to show compassion toward those we find weak and in bondage to sin. We are flesh and blood of one another, the same flesh and blood as each other: "Weak flesh sold into the slavery of sin" (Romans 7:14) but "in Christ and through his blood...redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous is God's favor toward us" (Ephesians 1:7-8). If this is so, then in like measure, are we to be generous with one another.

Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility meekness, and patience. Bear with one another; forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect.

Colossians 3:12-14

Prayer before the Sacrament is not a substitute for receiving the Sacrament. It flows from it. Prayer before the Sacrament is a "**moment of realization**", a moment of reflection in which we "make real to ourselves" the full truth of what we have received – a "real-ization" of who we are in the Lord and our responsibility for it.

COME TO JESUS!

Lay your cares, your burdens and your heartaches in his arms. God, who out of love for you became flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood, is here to meet you.

A Prayer for Young People:

Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread we break a sharing in the Body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 10:16

Lord Jesus, when I receive your Body and Blood in Holy Communion, you come to live in me. Now I kneel before you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood. I know and believe that you love me. Help me to love and serve you in the way I treat my family and friends, and even in the way I treat those I dislike.

Prayer of a Heart in Need:

Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

John 6:53

Come alive within me Jesus! Lay hold of my fears,
Dissolve any knots of sin. Break the cycle of my addictions.
Heal my memories. Wash me clean of bitterness and resentment.
Soften any lack of forgiveness within me. Bring forth the fruit
of love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith,
mildness and chastity. I choose a new life in you!

A Prayer of Realization:

*It is He who is our peace, and who made the two of us one
by breaking down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart.*

Ephesians 2:14

*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,
the Beginning and the End!*

Revelation 22:13

This is the Flesh that makes us one flesh!
This is the Blood that makes us one blood!
This is the Head that makes us one body!

Here, is the end of hatred;
Here is the beginning of love.
Here is the end of enmity;
Here is the beginning of compassion.
Here dissolves all excuses for war;
Here is the reason for peace.

Here is the end of nation and race;
Here is the beginning of one Humanity.

A Prayer of Saint Francis:

Most High and glorious God,
bring light to the darkness of my heart.
Give me right faith, certain hope and perfect charity.
Lord, give me insight and wisdom
so I might always discern Your holy and true will.