

Adoro Te Devote

Humbly I Adore Thee



When Fr. John Marie Vianney arrived at his new assignment at the remote village of Ars in southwestern France, he was met by a villager who said to him: “Here there is nothing to be done.” Virtually no one in Ars practiced the Faith. On Sunday the church would be empty while the market, carnival and taverns did their best business (like our shopping malls on Sundays). When Fr. John Marie offered his first Mass in Ars, a grand total of two people attended. How did he respond?

Not with the corporate marketplace mentality that has crept into the Church today. He didn’t establish committees to hold “listening sessions” to ascertain the peoples’ “lived experience.” Nor did he hire “liturgists” and contemporary musicians to create “dynamic” and exciting liturgies. Instead he rose at two o’clock in the morning and went to pray in front of the tabernacle in the dark church. He recited the Divine Office, he made his meditation, and he prepared himself for Holy Mass. After Mass, he made his thanksgiving. Then he remained at prayer until noon. He

would be always kneeling on the floor without any support, with a Rosary in his hand and his eyes fixed on the tabernacle. He slept but one hour a night and his diet consisted of cold potatoes, bread crumbs and water. You would always find him offering Mass, in the confessional or in adoration before the tabernacle. He rarely left Ars (no “days off”). All of this he did with one purpose in mind: the conversion of his parish. And so the transformation of Ars began.



Illustration: Maronite Monks

From that first Mass with two people in attendance things progressed till Ars became a thriving spiritual center. It all began with prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. As that transformed Ars, it can transform, you, me, our Church and our nation.

In this Easter Season during the Year of the Most Holy Eucharist we need to look to the example of the Holy Cure of Ars and other saints (e.g. St. Padre Pio and Blessed Mother Theresa) and come to Our Lord present in this great sacrament of His love. The transformation that took place in Ars is the very kind that we need so desperately today.

Sadly, belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is at an all-time low in the Church today. In 1992 a Gallup Survey of Catholics Regarding the Real Presence showed that only 30% of practicing Catholics (note: not all baptized Catholics, but practicing) believed that when they received Holy Communion they “really and truly received the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine.” 39% claimed they “received bread and wine, which symbolize the spirit and teachings of Jesus and in so doing are expressing attachment to his person and words.”

This loss of Faith can be seen in many practical ways. Few people genuflect when entering a church these days. In many a new “modern” church you need a road map to find the tabernacle. Many people dress slovenly for church (they won’t dress like that for the wedding reception or the expensive restaurant). Also you find more reverential silence in a public library than a church these days. What happened?

After Vatican II, many “liturgists,” taking their inspiration from the agnostic “Enlightenment” instead of the Tradition of the Church came to believe that the Reformers were right all-along about the Eucharist. In this view, Christ did not institute the Sacrifice of the Mass, but instead a simple communal meal whose purpose was “building community” and “celebrating who we are.” Many modern liturgists today don’t even bother to hide their hostility to the Blessed Sacrament. For them the focus is always to be the “celebrating community” (the fraternité of the French Revolution). High Altars and altar rails were destroyed to appease the egalitarian god and tabernacles moved to the far corners of the church (“it distracted from the celebrating community”) Religious catechesis emphasized the “communal meal” and the natural virtues of “being nice” and

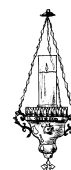
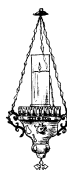
“tolerant” replaced the supernatural virtues. No wonder Gallup found the results that he did.

However remember that Almighty God is the Lord of History and He never leaves us abandoned. Many great saints have arisen in the past century who stressed adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as essential to our life of Faith. Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II proclaimed this the Year of the Eucharist in order to bring us back to that fountain of life. Perpetual adoration is appearing in more and more parishes. And, most hearteningly, many young people, rejecting the “baby-boomer” philosophy (and theology) of their elders, are manifesting a great desire for devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The seeds for a great restoration are being planted.



If one example today points to our need for the Real Presence of Christ to transform us today it is the Terri Schiavo case. As this is being written, her life hangs in a precarious balance.

How incredible that in these United States (supposedly a Christian nation) you have people, organizations and judges that, simply put, want this woman dead. That is explained only in terms of the diabolic. The very parents who brought her into this world and love her dearly are totally helpless to protect her. What does that say about our future? Only a small group of pro-lifers are rallying to her defense (One wonders where the “seamless garment” crowd is). If Terri is starved to death, we will be inviting God’s judgment upon us. God is not deaf to the cries of the abandoned and all of us will have to account for this. This is why as the Culture of Death rages we need to turn to the Real Presence of Christ.



Noted speaker Fr. John Corapi S.O.L.T. once challenged the bishops in this fashion: wherever there is an abortion clinic, place as close as possible a chapel (even one room) of perpetual adoration. The Real Presence of Christ will drive away the smoke of Satan. Perhaps all those devout people who sacrifice to spend time in adoration of Our Lord are in effect staying God's judgment on us. (Recall Abraham and God about the city of Sodom).

We here at Most Holy Trinity Monastery make

the adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament the center of our life. That's why we exist. When each monk does his two hours of adoration each day, he brings you with him before Our Lord. Let us turn to Him with renewed love during this Easter Season. Ars seemed like an impossible case, but look what one simple priest's devotion accomplished. Each of us can accomplish just as much. All Our Lord asks is, "Could you spend one hour with me?"