

## Eucharistic Prayer & Adoration

Kathryn James Hermes

I am sister Kathryn James Hermes, and I'm really glad that you decided to join me here today for this session in the Praying More Eucharist retreat. In this session, we are going to be reflecting together on, on how Eucharistic prayer and adoration of Jesus in the most blessed sacrament is really all about love.

### Opening Prayer

So let's begin with a prayer. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Jesus, I thank you for this time together. I thank you for each person here. I thank you for the gift that you have given us of yourself in the Eucharist. I thank you for coming to us, for seeking us out. I thank you for pouring out your life for us, for loving us to the end. I praise you for forgiving us, for desiring us, for teaching us, and for healing us.

In this moment, I invite each of you to notice that Jesus is here, that He is with us, that He's with you, that Jesus is in you, and that Jesus is for you. Jesus' loving glance touches your heart, it brings you closer to the joy that He yearns to give you. His glance opens your heart to the gift He wants to give. To the seed of the word that He wants to plant in the soil of your soul, Jesus' loving glance, peeks at you through all the experiences of your life. But most especially, you know, you are cherished as you pray before His life poured out for you in the Eucharist. It is there you know that you are loved and that you are known, and That you are desired. When we allow ourselves to be looked upon in this way, then we notice that in some mysterious way, we immediately get back in touch with the deepest desires of our soul.

O God, you are my God for You I long, for You my soul thirst. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

### He Is Coming For You

So I often meet people who tell me that they aren't sure what to do while they're before Jesus and the Eucharist, should I read, what book should I read? Should I say the rosary? Should I pray for a list of intentions? And then what about the next time I go? Do I do the same thing? Our heart really longs to experience love and to know that we're held and that we're cared for, to be certain that God is there for us and that He hears us. We yearn to just have a place to lay down our burdens, and friends, that is what Eucharistic adoration is really all about. It's about love, it's about safety, it's about confidence and trust, and it's also about praise and adoration and blessing and thanksgiving. And that's a lot to do in the space of a Holy Hour.

Today, I'm going to share with you something Jesus has recently helped me to see and a guide for Holy Hours from our founder, Blessed James Alberione. So Jesus' message to me is this, He is coming for me. In the Bible, in the book, the Song of Songs, in chapter two verse eight, we read "Hark, listen, the voice of my beloved. Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains and bounding over the hills."

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"Hark, listen." She has already heard something. The soul has already heard a voice, and it's a voice that she can identify, a voice that she has heard before. It's a voice of someone that she trusts, that she loves and that she knows, loves her. "Behold He comes". God takes the initiative, it is the Lord who comes. It is Jesus who extends himself to us, to you, to me personally. This Jesus who, who has waited for 2000 years for this one meeting that you or I are going to have with Him. This one encounter, this one, you could say, tryst of love with Him. He comes leaping upon the mountains and bounding over the hills. He comes with delight, He's eager to come. He comes with great joy. And He comes to you because He wants to, in a sense, He can't hold Himself away from you. He can't hold back the torrent of His love.

### God's Love For Us is Perfect

Speaking of the Mass, but equally true of Eucharistic adoration, Pope Francis has said "Before, our response to His invitation, well before, there is His desire for us." We may not even be aware of it, but every time you go to mass and adoration, the first reason we go there is that we are drawn there and we're drawn there by His desire for us, for you and for me, and for our part. The possible response, which is also the most demanding asceticism, is to surrender, to surrender to His love, this letting oneself be drawn by Him. I'm reminded of the words, of Theresa Little flower right before she died, And she said these words, I believe to Sister Genevieve and she said, "allow yourself to be loved. Let yourself be loved." And those, those are so true for each one of us.

So how can we catch the spirit of this bounding and leaping lover? How can we understand to the very roots of our being, the central message of this passage of scripture, that it contains the revelation of how much God loves us When we read just these two verses of the Song of Songs, we can be overwhelmed realizing that we can expect great things from this God, that God thinks that we are beautiful and that God wants to give Himself to us with delight and joy. When everything in the world around us, when perhaps within us too and in our families or where we work, the Eucharist is a place where we can go to experience a love that is changeless. God's love for us is perfect, and it never ever changes. And as we enter into it more and more completely, the mystery and the beauty of it is that we change.

### The Visit is A Meeting Of Our Soul

The spousal imagery of the song, of songs is just one of many different images that we could call upon to enter into the spirit of adoration. We call the time of adoration the visit because it's meant to be a visit, a visit of friends with each other. You can imagine sitting down with a friend for a cup of coffee. It's meant to be familiar, to be close, to be trusting, to be a value of worth, and to actually give us a space where we can work through our life and come out after that visit in a, in a better space, in in a deeper space and a space where we see our life as meaning, our life as worth, that we are not alone in this life.

So our founder used to call the hour of adoration, "The eucharistic visit", and that's what we call it, as daughters of St. Paul. The visit is really a meeting of our soul, he said, and of our whole being with Jesus Christ. And then he gave us a list of, of images that are so powerful.

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So it's a meeting of the creature with the one who created them, it's the meeting of a disciple with the divine teacher, with the divine master. It's the patient with the divine surgeon, with the doctor of souls. It's the meeting of the thirsty one with the fountain of life where we can drink, drink to our hearts content. It's the meeting of the weak one before the almighty one, the one who is strength rock refuge, a sublime person searching for light and coming before the light of the world. It's the lost cheap sought by the divine Shepherd, It's the wayward one who's lost and who finds the way or the path, the road, the ladder to heaven. It's the afflicted one who finds the one who consoles, who holds, who comforts. It's the seeker, who is in search and discovers life's true meaning.

And, really, when you listen to this list of images I found, and I'm sure you can find that on different days, we are different. We, approach Jesus in different ways and these images represent kind of the kaleidoscope or the mosaic of the different ways we feel in our life when we come before Jesus. But most importantly, it's a coming before Jesus and it's a conversation.

So, and it's an encounter. We can think of the encounter of the shepherds at the crib where Jesus is born or the encounter of Mary Magdalene at Simon's house or the encounter of Nicodemus with Jesus when he comes by night for that conversation, so powerful at the beginning in of the gospel of John. It's the holy discussion, that we'll find between the Samaritan woman and Jesus. And that lovely and meaningful discussion with Jesus and Zacchaeus when he comes down from the tree at the invitation of Jesus. Before Jesus in the Eucharist, who is the risen one, the Savior, our redeemer. the one who truly understands us. We enter into a space where all time comes together in Christ.

All time comes together in Christ and where everything is presence, where we can enter into the dispositions and the attitude and the very meeting that people and the gospels had when they met Jesus. We like they can see his eyes on us and whisper our stories to Him and hear His caring tenderness or His powerful challenges. We can reach out and touch Him and be touched by Him in the depths of our very being.

The visit the holy hour, the hour of adoration is really for us, a place where we learn also how Jesus thinks, how, how Jesus loves, how He desires, how, He acts, and little by little we become similar to Jesus in everything. Because we come to Jesus in the blessed sacrament with everything that we're living at that moment.

### He Sees You

I remember some time ago, I sat down in chapel and I was finished. I had been put through the ringer and I felt I had been tossed to the side by those I had trusted, I had been left out in the cold by those that thought cared about me, It was a dramatic moment and, and I felt anything could happen to me at this point. I was at the end of my rope and whatever God had up a sleeve was just fine with me. Just take my life, I told Jesus, do whatever you want, I really don't care anymore. I felt I had no worth, that I valued to no one and my heart steep needs for belonging and significance.

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I realized I had not been able to meet on my own steam. And I just sat there in the emptiness of that adoration chapel. I sat there in the silence with everything I was going through, everything I felt, everything I was, in the loneliness. And I very slowly began to realize that all my attempts to meet my heart's needs were not working and my attempts were actually getting in the way.

And I opened the scriptures and I began to read the ascension of Jesus into heaven and the account of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles at Pentecost. And at that moment, I had such a profound experience. There was in me on a deep level, a movement of the spirit, this thrill of being seen, of being wanted, in a very deep way by God; and of knowing that I matter, I matter. Jesus in the light of glory will raise me to full participation in the divine life, into a share of divine happiness. And the thrill of that joy was palpable, I matter. The Son of God came on this earth laying aside His robes of glory and taking up the service towel to wash me clean of sin and guilt and death and hopelessness and with His ascension and the gift of the spirit, I clearly saw at that moment that He will unite me so intimately with Himself, I matter.

### We Approach Jesus Himself

In that visit with Jesus over a year of struggle and sorrow were washed away with the truth. The truth which Paul proclaims in his letter to the Ephesians that, I have been chosen by the Father before the creation of the world. Just think of that, chosen each of us before the creation of the world and predestined for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ.

When we approach the Eucharist, faith demands that we are fully aware that we are approaching Jesus Himself. And this my friends, is a spirit of Eucharistic adoration. We approach Jesus with everything of our going through in life at that moment, that day or everything we remember that we've gone through that suddenly is coming up to us or is triggered within us. We approach Jesus who teaches, who heals, who leads us, who guides us, who holds us, and who sends us.

### Blessed Alberione's Prayer

Blessed Alberione gave us his own secret of praying in Eucharistic adoration before the risen Jesus. And it's really simple, it's very easy and it's completely adaptable to whatever you are living and going through at the moment. The most important piece of wisdom he has to share with us is this, speak to Jesus about everything. And he has this famous quote, and in that quote he says, and "even if your shoe hurts, Jesus wants to know even the most mundane aspects of your life." So talk to him about your shoe hurting or about the bill for the changing of the roof that you don't know how you're going to pay or what to do about, you know, a fellow employee that you're working with or whatever it may be, how you're going to get to soccer practice with your child, tell Jesus about everything.

James Alberione's secret sauce, I could call it for adoring Jesus in the Eucharist has this rhythm and, and this is how I remember it, "Jesus teach me, Jesus heal me, Jesus hold me, and Jesus use me."

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### Jesus Teach Me

Jesus teach me when you, enter into adoration, as you settle down in that adoration chapel or in the church, take some time to just come into the moment, to come into the presence of Jesus and the Eucharist of the Lord, of hosts, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Prince of peace, the King of Kings, the Son of God, the Lamb of God. Take some time to settle into His presence and to notice what is in your heart. Take time, what is in my mind and, and offer all that to Him. Put it in His hands and talk to Jesus about it, and tell him you need him to take care of it.

I usually say something like, "Jesus, may every moment of this prayer be pleasing to you." I want to be all there to listen, to learn, to be found. If I'm feeling lost or rejuvenated, if I'm feeling tired that day, we want to hear His voice so you can open up the letter that has been sent to us by God, the Bible, the sacred scriptures. And just as I started this talk with a deep reflection on one verse of the book of the song, the songs, Eucharistic Adoration begins with listening. You could use the Bible, you could read in, in consecutive order one of the books of the Bible, or you could open it up at random. You could be looking at a different parable, day after day, looking at the different parables or reading the prophets. It doesn't matter, Jesus, teach me, teach me. I am ignorant, I do not know the way, teach me.

And after reading, take time to reflect, to ask Jesus, what is it that you want me to know about this? And how does this affect my life? Or when new thing Jesus are you desiring to bring about for me? Reflect on how what you read might shed light on what you are living at that moment in your life. Jesus, teach me. Jesus as a teacher in the Gospel didn't just give people information. He called them to an experience. He called them in the gospels to an experience with God, to a conversation, to a transformed life, to live the same way He lived, to love with the courage and compassion, He loved others. So talk with Jesus about what you're beginning to notice as you reflect in a deeper way upon His word. Jesus, teach me,

Pope Francis said, to be admitted to the feast of the supper, of the wedding of the lamb. All that is needed is a wedding garment of faith, which comes from the hearing of the word. Our adoration actually prepares us as we listen for the mass, and it also extends to us the grace and the mystery of the Eucharist, which we have received at mass.

### Jesus Heal Me

Jesus heal me. I like to begin this second moment with Jesus, with just a very simple act of adoration or a faith and of gratitude. I might imagine myself bowing before Jesus like the shepherds and the kings when He was born or sitting at His feet like Mary or standing with the blessed of mother beneath the cross. It's really important to keep our attention on Jesus, to listen and to speak and to listen some more. In this second moment, we hold our lives up to Jesus and we look at our image in His light, we compare ourselves to Him. I often go back to what I just read and I look more closely at Jesus. I pay attention to how I reacted to something that happened in the reading.

Maybe I realize that I too feel blind or lonely or maybe I'm upset about an injustice or a misunderstanding. These are all the wounded places in our life where the spirit works, the

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imperfect places that are real for us, that we need, we need to accept with humility and places that we need to allow the light in. This is a time when we are that patient before the doctor, before the divine surgeon of souls or where that lost sheep before the good shepherd. So in need of the good shepherd who leaves everything to find that sheep, He comes to find us. There are so many ways to look at our life with Jesus, the examine as it is traditionally understood, like talking over with Jesus's situation of our life and asking Him what needs to change in our own life for it to be healed and or noticing how we reacted to the reading and exploring that with the Lord. I often will enter into a powerful relational moment with Jesus recounted in the Gospels for just a moment.

I invite you to imagine Jesus at the last supper, standing up from the table prepared for the Passover. He slowly takes off His outer garments and you are there to take them from Him. You fold them, you place them to the side, and then you hand Him the large servant's towel, which He says wraps around His waist. And then He looks at you with such love, such tenderness, such compassion, and you sit down on a chair around the floor and Jesus begins to pour water over your feet.

The feet of the apostles were dirty because herds of sheep crowded down those streets in Palestine, especially at the Passover. So those streets were like super messy, but we, you and I, what makes our feet dirty? Where is that messed up place in your life that maybe you don't want anyone to know about? Where is the place that right now Jesus is showing you that He wants to wash clean, that He wants to heal, that you pour out His life for not just water, but His very blood to cleanse you from, from all that defiles you Jesus is here to heal our wounds, yours and mine. What will it be like when you realize that Jesus does really wash away the past, does really remove those wounds that, we want to heal, that we want to hide and does truly make us new? What will it be like when, when we really understand Easter joy?

And we conclude this part of the rhythm of the visit, heal me with an act of sorrow and asking Jesus, where are you calling me to be different? Where are you calling me to move in new ways and or to let go or to take up something new or different? We can formulate an idea of how we can now return to our life with, with a new attitude or, or a different way of interpreting what is going on or having received the grace of conversion. We can look ahead and imagine ourselves living in this new way, in the same old situation that we can't change. We can beg for the help of Jesus and Mary.

### Jesus Hold Me

The third part of the rhythm is this, Jesus, hold me, Jesus hold me. In this third moment of adoration, we let our hearts love Jesus and we experience that God loves us, that God holds us, that God is truly our refuge and our strength. We take time to rest in prayer. You could say the rosary, you could make the way of the cross, You could pray the divine mercy chaplet; or you could simply rest and wait. Be there, be there with Jesus, be there heart to heart.

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I imagine myself at times, resting my forehead against the forehead of Jesus, being there quietly, closely with Him, listening, receiving, and bringing to Jesus all the needs of the world and all those intercessions that are close to you in your own heart, allowing Jesus even to love the world through you.

### Jesus Use Me

And finally, Jesus used me. Every single person on this earth is called to the table of the Eucharist, to the foot of the cross.

Every single person is called to the mass, to communion. We are so privileged that we have daily access to this gift, to Jesus who stays here with us and for us. So Jesus sends us from the mass, from adoration after this time of intimacy with Him to others who need to know that they are seen and loved and held and taught and cherished and healed by God, that they are not alone.

My brothers and sisters, we may be the only Christ that they see unless we can invite them to join us at the Eucharist. Those words again from the Song of Songs, *"The voice of my beloved, behold He comes leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. This lover, behold He comes."*

The Eucharist is the most powerful way to experience the living Jesus Christ on this earth. Jesus, who is the truth and who alone shows us what is true and what is real Jesus, who is the way of healing and goodness. This Jesus who is the one who lifts us up into His own very life, His love to His worship of the Father, to His experience of the father's incredible and unending love and amazing tenderness. This love that the father has for him, which is now ours. Jesus, our truth, our way, our life. Teach me and heal me, and hold me and use me. Amen.

Thank you for being here with me today and I pray that God will continue to bless you on this retreat with His amazing love and mercy and grace. Amen.