

**Homily for the 25th Anniversary of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Joseph's Hospital
Highland, Illinois**

**Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter
May 8, 2019**

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Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers and Deacons, consecrated religious, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ: it is good that we are here to celebrate this 25th Anniversary of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration here at Saint Joseph's Hospital. For the past twenty-five years, men, women, and children have come to this chapel both day and night to spend time with our Lord, resting in His loving presence, thanking Him for His countless blessings, and bringing to Him their various needs and intentions.

When Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, He left us the greatest gift possible, the gift of Himself: His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, truly present in the Eucharist. Our reception of this great sacrament at Mass is the "source and summit" of our entire lives as Christians as it brings us into a deeper communion with the Lord and with all of those united to Him in the bond of His love.

As those who regularly spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament know, that bond with Christ and His Mystical Body is strengthened through the practice of Eucharistic Adoration, for “[t]he act of adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself.”¹ While spending time in prayerful adoration seems like a waste of time to our efficiency-driven culture, the truth of the matter is that time spent with Jesus is never time wasted, but always time used well; it is not simply time spent sitting and doing nothing, but an experience of dwelling in our Lord’s love. For time spent in prayer is an opportunity for us to further develop our personal relationship with the God who loves us. It is out of that awareness of being beloved sons and daughters of God that we more lovingly follow Him in our daily lives.

Following our Diocesan Synod, I have witnessed the people of our diocese embark on a path that is more intensely focused on following Christ as His disciples in the midst of the world today. The disciples in the Gospels were those who knew the Lord and were close to Him. Since we are all called to be disciples, the same must be true for us, that we know Him and are close to Him. This takes place in the Mass and is strengthened through time spent in Eucharistic Adoration.

It is therefore timely that we have this celebration today, as the presence of this chapel, and other places in our diocese like it, are very crucial to conforming our lives to that of Christ. These sacred places of adoration provide the opportunity for the faithful to strengthen their bond of communion with the Lord and so become more dedicated missionary disciples who serve Him and His Church.

The strengthened bond of communion with the Lord resulting from Eucharistic Adoration also necessarily includes our bond of communion with others. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, highlighted this theme in an address when he said:

This communion of ours with the Lord commits us, His disciples, to imitate Him, making of our existence, with our attitudes, bread broken for others, as the Master broke bread which is really His flesh. For us, instead, it is our generous behavior towards our neighbor which demonstrates the attitude of breaking our life for others.²

In Eucharistic Adoration, this communion with others takes place first in the form of prayer. Particularly here in this hospital, when we come to adore the Lord, we bring with us those patients who are in need of healing and of comfort, including the nurses who provide compassionate care, the

doctors who seek to alleviate the pains and ailments of the body, and the families who feel helpless.

In addition to our prayers, we bring before the Lord the many intentions of others who have asked for our prayers, those for whom we have promised to pray, and indeed for all of those we are aware of who are in need of God's assistance in their lives.

We are also mindful of the urgent need for prayers for our state and its leaders. In recent years, Illinois politicians have saddled our state with a series of serious evils, among them being taxpayer-funded abortion, same-sex marriage, and the widespread proliferation of video gambling. And, now, last week Illinois' new governor, J.B. Pritzker, was joined by Democratic lawmakers in Chicago to announce plans to legalize recreational marijuana in our state starting next year. This comes on the heels of their recent introduction of extreme pro-abortion legislation seeking to make good on Governor Pritzker's pledge to make Illinois the most pro-abortion state in the Union. It seems that Governor Pritzker and like-minded lawmakers are intent on driving Illinois deeper into a cesspool of immorality.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot stand idly by and permit our elected officials to turn our state into one of the most morally bankrupt states in the country. Rather, we must work and pray for the conversion of those who represent us in our state legislative and executive branches so that our society as a whole may find the true peace it so earnestly desires.

In this regard, Pope St. John Paul II emphasized the intimate connection between Eucharistic Adoration and our hope for conversion and peace when he said:

The best, the most effective, and the surest way of bringing about an everlasting peace on the face of the earth is through the great power of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, because only Jesus has the power and the love to redirect the course of human history back to the path of peace, which He promised.³

As we continue this greatest act of adoration of Jesus in the celebration of the Mass, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you who are involved in this important apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration here at Saint Joseph's Hospital. I have no doubt that the many hours of prayer here in

this chapel have contributed to Lord's bestowing many blessings on this community, on our diocese, and on the Universal Church. Some of these blessings have been visible, while many of them have remained invisible, but all have nonetheless served to strengthen the Mystical Body of Christ in significant ways.

This chapel is a place of extreme importance for the future of our Church and the world. It is my prayer that you will see the great opportunity that you have in contributing to the continued mission of the Church by praying for all of her needs throughout the world. I also pray that you will see this chapel as a place for deepening your relationship with the Lord, and personally inviting others to do the same. By doing so, each of us will grow to be more committed disciples of the Lord who seek to offer ourselves in service to the building up of the Kingdom where we all hope to be at the end of our journey, adoring our Lord face-to-face for all eternity.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, §66.

² Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 22 June 2014.

³ Pope St. John Paul II, Address, 2 December 1981.