



THE PARISH OF ST PETER & ST LEONARD, HORBURY,
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Resources for Private Prayer Before the Blessed Sacrament

Adapted from

‘Visits to Jesus in the Tabernacle: Hours and Half-Hours
of Adoration Before the Blessed Sacrament’
by Rev. F. X. Lasance (New York, 1898)

Introduction

We are very used to people ‘popping into’ our churches when they are open. Some enter to admire the buildings; others come to offer prayers for themselves, or loved ones whose pains and sufferings weigh on their hearts. But look to the origins of folk visiting churches, and you will discover a practice which has slipped from our common imagination in twenty-first century Britain, and that is paying a visit to see and converse with Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we believe abides, ‘really, truly, and substantially’, in the Blessed Sacrament, which is housed in the tabernacle.

In a chapter entitled ‘Visits to Jesus in the Tabernacle’, written for his book of the same name, the American priest Fr Francis Xavier Lasance calls our attention to a longing we Christians often have. The author writes: ‘There are many persons who wish they had lived “at the time of Our Lord”... [when] he walked the earth in his visible humanity.’ And this is certainly something I feel from time to time: wouldn’t it have been great actually to have seen Jesus? Wouldn’t it have been fantastic to have sat at his feet and listened to his teaching? Wouldn’t it have been amazing to see him perform his many miracles, healing the sick, even raising the dead?

Back then, Fr Lasance continues, Our Lord was ‘corporally present in but one place at a time, and, comparatively speaking, but a small number of men were blessed with the sight of his divine countenance.



But *now*,’ the priest reminds us, ‘in every place where his word is preached, he himself abides, not in figure, but in reality. Many of you live quite close to a church; you, perhaps, pass it daily in your walks, or as you go to and from your work. Do you think of it? Do you realize that he himself is there, as truly present as he was present in the Holy Land [some 2000 years] ago? Do you realize that the same pierced hands are waiting there to bless you, the same gentle eyes to gaze upon you, and that same adorable heart is calling you, loving you,

waiting for you to give it some little sign of love, or at least recognition – if nothing more than a genuflection?’

Well supposing you and I *had* lived centuries ago, and that you and I *had* had the privilege of being invited to sit with the Lord. What would we have said? Loving him as we love no one else, would we not have been eager to discuss with him every joy and sorrow we encountered each day? Would we not have sought his consolation and comfort in our difficulties? Would we not have perhaps thanked him for the gifts he so freely and generously gives us? Would we not have laid our loved ones at his feet and asked for his blessing on them and on ourselves?

The Good News, friends, is that we need not imagine these fanciful historical encounters, because Jesus *is* here, in our midst, ‘really, truly, and substantially’, as our faith teaches. What we would have said to him then, we can say to him now, because he dwells just round the corner from where we live! We can come to him, now, with our hearts full of joy, or sorrow, adoration or concern. We can come to him, now, with words or in silence, telling him everything we want him to know, or listening to what he has to say to us, how he wishes to stir our hearts. We can do this, now, because here is here, contained in the Blessed Sacrament, housed in the tabernacles of our churches.

This short booklet is being offered to you at a time when we are, God willing, coming out of the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has not only prevented our reception of the Blessed Sacrament in the Holy Eucharist, but even more painfully, has meant that we were prevented from entering our own church buildings to draw close to Our Lord whom we know resides there. It has been a painful reality to bear – and we pray may never happen in our lifetimes again – and yet if we are to learn anything from our recent exile, it must be that we are reminded of just what a treasure we hold in our very midst.

So I pray that now our buildings are being opened once again, you may feel that desire burning deep within you to return to the Lord’s presence, and that that may stay with you, even grow in you, in the coming days, weeks, months and years ahead, even beyond when we can once again receive the Lord in the sharing of holy Communion.

In his book, Fr Lasance recommends that we resolve never to pass by or near a church without entering it, not just to see the beauty of the built environment, but more importantly to visit Jesus, if he is

there. He begs we resolve on those occasions to enter and just sit quietly, for a moment or two, or longer if we can, to offer our prayers and thanks to God. He also suggests that if time doesn't permit such a visit, that we might 'salute our Master in our hearts' as we pass the door, or even make the Sign of the Cross, remembering that he is here. What wonderful advice that is – may we take it to our hearts.

If, however, time *does* permit – as it might soon in this limbo period before public worship is restored to us – Lasance also asks that we make special effort to go and sit in church, before the Blessed Sacrament, maybe for half an hour, or an hour – perhaps when otherwise we might have been at mass itself – and pray. To that end of sitting and contemplating, Fr Lasance offers a number of resources, a selection of which are printed for you below, to help focus your mind when you come into our churches to visit Our Lord. I hope they are not only of use, but that through them, the devotion they inspire might strengthen your faith and love of him, the Creator of the Universe, who is contained in that tiny and fragile, but most precious and sacred, Host.

Fr Christopher Johnson,
St Peter's Vicarage, Horbury,
9th June 2020.



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Acts and Prayers to be said when Visiting the Blessed Sacrament

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

✠ O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me.

Strengthen me, O Lord God, in this hour, that I may bring to pass that
which I purposed, having a belief that it might be done by thee.

Holy Spirit! Lord of light!
From thy clear celestial height,
Thy pure, beaming radiance give:
Come, thou Father of the poor!
Come, with treasures which endure!
Come, thou light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,
Visiting the troubled breast,
Dost refreshing peace bestow:
Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal! Light divine!
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill.
If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds – our strength renew;
On our dryness pour thy dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away.
Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on those who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
In thy sevenfold gifts descend.
Give them comfort when they die;
Give them life with thee on high;
Give them joys which never end. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful,
and kindle in them the fire of thy love.

✠. Send forth thy Spirit and our hearts will be regenerated.

✠. And thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant that we may, by the gift of the same Spirit,
be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolations.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now offer your prayers guided by the commentary below.

The commentary recommends spending one hour in meditation,
devoting quarter of an hour to each 'end of sacrifice', but if you are
spending more or less time, simply divide your time accordingly.



How to Adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament

The Hour of Adoration is divided into four parts. During each quarter of an hour we are to honour Our Lord by one of the Four Ends of Sacrifice, that is, by Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, and Prayer or Supplication.

I. FIRST QUARTER OF AN HOUR –
ADORATION

Adore Our Lord in his Divine Sacrament by, first, the exterior homage of the body.

As soon as you perceive his adorable Presence in the sacred Host, genuflect profoundly and with extreme reverence as an evidence of your faith and love. Adore him in union with the Wise Men, when prostrating themselves to the earth they adored the infant God, cradled in a humble manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. After this first silent

and impulsive act of homage, adore the Lord by a vocal Act of Faith. [You can find an example Act of Faith on p. 12 below.] This Act of Faith is needed to awaken the senses and render them susceptible to the influences of devotion.

It will open to you the heart of the divine Master, and the treasures of his grace. Be faithful to it and make it with simplicity and devotion.

Offer now to Jesus the homage of your whole being, specifying the homage of each particular faculty of your soul. Offer him your mind to know him better, your heart to love him, your will to serve him, your body with all its senses, that each may glorify him in its own way.

Offer him your thoughts, that the Eucharist may be the dominating thought of your life and may reign over your heart and its affections; calling Jesus your God and your King, and desiring no other aim in life than to serve, to love, to glorify him. Give him your memory, that it may dwell on him alone, and thus desire to live but for him, in him, and through him.

Since your adoration is in itself so weak and imperfect, unite it to the adoration of the Blessed Virgin at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, in the Cenacle, on Calvary, and before the Tabernacle. Unite it to the adoration of holy Church and all pious souls who are adoring Our Lord at this moment, and with the heavenly court, glorifying him in heaven, and your adoration will share in their merit and holiness.



2. SECOND QUARTER OF AN HOUR – THANKSGIVING

Adore the immense and personal love of Jesus Christ for you in the Holy Eucharist.

That you might not be left lonely and orphaned in this land of misery and exile he comes himself from heaven to abide with you and to be your Consoler and Comforter. Thank him then with all your heart and with all your strength. Thank him in union with all the saints.

Wonder at and admire the sacrifice he makes for you in his sacramental state. He conceals his divine and human glory that you may not be dazzled or blinded by its splendour and effulgence. He veils his majesty that you may dare to approach him familiarly and speak with him as friend to friend. He restrains his power and holds it captive that he may not punish or affright you. He hides from you his wondrous perfections that your weakness may not be discouraged. He tempers even the ardours of his divine love, the love of the Sacred Heart, lest you could not support its strength and its tenderness. He permits his divine goodness alone to escape and to radiate from the sacred Host as the rays of the sun shine through a light and fleecy cloud. Oh, how good he is, your sacramental Jesus!

He receives you at all times, day or night. His love knows no repose. He is ever full of sweetness to you. He forgets your sins and your imperfections when you visit him, to testify only his happiness, his delight, at your visit. It would seem that he needed you to make him happy. Oh, thank, then, this dear and loving Jesus with all the effusion of your soul. Thank the heavenly Father for having thus given you his divine Son. Thank the Holy Ghost for this new Incarnation of Our Lord upon the altar by the ministry of the priest, and for you personally.

Invite heaven and earth, angels and men, to join you in thanking, in blessing, in glorifying Our Lord for his marvellous love.

Contemplate with wonder the humiliations of the sacramental state which Jesus has taken upon himself for love of you. He is poorer in the Holy Eucharist than in Bethlehem even, for there he had his Mother, and here he has her not. He has brought with him from heaven only his grace and his love. How obedient he is! He yields a sweet, a prompt obedience to every one, even to his enemies.

Admire his humility. He descends to the borders of annihilation, uniting himself to the common and inanimate matter of the Sacred Species, whose frail elements have no consistency but that given them by the word of the Almighty which preserves them continually. His love for us keeps him our prisoner forever. It is the chain that binds him until the end of the world in that eucharistic prison that should be our heaven upon earth.

Unite your thanksgiving to that of the Blessed Virgin, before the Incarnation, and, above all, before holy communion. Repeat with her in joyous accents, the Magnificat of your thanksgiving and love, and say continually: 'O Jesus, how good, how loving, how lovely art thou in thy divine sacrament!'

3. THIRD QUARTER OF AN HOUR – REPARATION

Adore and console Jesus abandoned and despised by men in his sacrament of love. Man has time for everything except to visit his Lord and his God who waits for him so patiently and thirsts for his love in the tabernacle. The streets, the theatres are crowded; the house of God, alas! is empty. 'O poor Jesus, O neglected Jesus! how canst thou abide such indifference from those thou hast purchased at so great a cost; from thy friends, from thy children, from me!'

Weep over Jesus betrayed, insulted, mocked, and crucified more cruelly in his sacrament of love than in the Garden of Olives, in Jerusalem, or on Calvary. And it is too often those whom he has most loved, most honoured, and most enriched with his gifts and graces who offend him most, who dishonour him most in his holy temple by their irreverence – who crucify him anew by tepid or even sacrilegious communions.

O divine Jesus, couldst thou have believed that the very greatness of thy love would furnish man with an object for his malice, that he would turn against thee even thy most precious gifts and graces!

And I, alas! have I nothing to reproach myself with? Have I ever been negligent or unfaithful to thee?

Adore Jesus, and seek to make reparation for the negligence, profanation, and sacrilege that he meets with so frequently. Offer with this intention all the sufferings that you must endure during the day or the week. Impose upon yourself some penance for your own

sins and those of your relations, or for those whom you have disedified by your want of devotion in church, or even by your distractions and levity.

But since all your satisfactions and penances are so few and so worthless in reparation for such great sins, unite them with those of Jesus Christ your Saviour upon the cross. Gather up the precious blood that flows from his sacred wounds and offer it to the Divine Justice in reparation. Offer the prayers and sufferings of the crucified Jesus to the heavenly Father, and beg in return grace and mercy for yourself and all sinners.

Unite your reparation to that of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross, and you will obtain all that you ask through the love of Jesus for his immaculate Mother.

4. FOURTH QUARTER OF AN HOUR – PETITION

Adore Our Lord in his most divine sacrament, pleading unceasingly for you, showing his sacred wounds, his sacred heart pierced with the lance to his heavenly Father to win mercy for you and yours. Unite your prayers to his and ask what he asks.

Jesus prays his heavenly Father to bless, to exalt, to defend his Church; he prays him to make it better known, and better loved and served among men. Pray for Holy Church so tried, so persecuted in the person of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, that God may deliver him from his enemies, that he may convert and bring them humbled and repentant to his feet.

Jesus prays continually for the sacred priesthood, that its members may be filled with the grace and unction of the Holy Spirit; that they may grow in all virtues and be consumed with zeal for his glory and the salvation of the souls he has purchased with his death on the cross. Pray earnestly for your bishop, that God may preserve him to you, that he may bless and console him and grant success to his zealous desires for God's greater glory.

Pray for your pastors, that they may grow in the virtues of their state and may be enlightened and strengthened to lead and sanctify the little flock confided to their solicitude and direction.

Pray that God may grant to Holy Church many and saintly vocations to the priesthood. A holy priest is the greatest gift of heaven. He may bring down the blessings of God upon a whole city.

Pray for all Religious Orders, that they may be ever fervent and faithful in their apostolic vocation, and that all whom God calls to the Religious life may have the grace to answer the divine call and be ever faithful to it. One saint may save an entire nation, and his prayers are a surer safeguard and protection to his country than the might of armies.

Pray for the fervour and perseverance of pious souls in the world who are vowed or devoted to the service of God. To the tender charity of his sacred heart they, too, are Religious, and have greater need of prayer and assistance, because they must face greater dangers and greater sacrifices.

Ask of God the conversion of some great sinner, and in an appointed or definite space of time. Nothing gives so much glory to God as these marvellous manifestations of his mercy and grace.

Then, at last, pray for yourself, that you may become more holy, and may spend your days in a manner pleasing to God.

Pray for the holy souls in purgatory.

Make a little bouquet of your prayers and your sacrifices, offer it to Jesus, and ask him in return for his loving benediction.



Morning Devotions Before the Blessed Sacrament

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, who hath created me.

Glory be to the Son, who hath redeemed me.

Glory be to the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified me.

Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity, now and forever. Amen.

ADORATION AND GRATITUDE

O my God! I adore thee; I love thee with all my heart; I return thee thanks for the great and innumerable benefits and graces which I have received from thy infinite goodness and mercy, especially for having preserved me last night and for having given me another day to serve thee and to increase my eternal glory in heaven.

GOOD INTENTION

Eternal Father! I offer to thee my whole being, and in particular all my thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings of this day, in union with the holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ and through the immaculate heart of Mary, humbly supplicating thee that, through the infinite merits of thy divine Son, together with the intercession of his blessed Mother, they may all become agreeable and meritorious in thy sight. May thy divine love animate them, and may they all tend to thy greater glory. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to be loved above all things. I am sorry for all the sins that I have committed against thee, because by them I have offended thee, who art infinitely good and deserving of all my love. Grant that I may spend this day well. I would rather die than commit one mortal sin. My Lord! My God! My All! I will live for thee, I will suffer patiently for thee, I will die for thee. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Give me the grace of final perseverance.

ACT OF FAITH

I firmly believe that there is one God, and that in this one God there are three Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; that the Son took to himself the nature of man in the Virgin Mary's womb, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that in this our human nature he was crucified and died for us; that he rose again and ascended into heaven, from thence he shall come to repay the just everlasting glory and the wicked everlasting punishment. Moreover, I believe whatsoever else the Catholic Church proposes to be believed, because God, who is the Sovereign Truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed all these things to his Church.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God! relying on thy almighty power and thy infinite mercy and goodness, and because thou art faithful to thy promises, I trust in thee that thou wilt grant me forgiveness of my sins, through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son; and that thou wilt give me the assistance of thy grace, with which I may labour to the end in the diligent exercise of all good works, and may deserve to obtain the glory which thou hast promised in heaven.

ACT OF CHARITY

O Lord, my God! I love thee with my whole heart, and above all things, because thou art the Sovereign Good, and for thine own infinite perfections art most worthy of all love; and for thy sake I also love my neighbour as myself.

Say **the** Our Father, Hail Mary **and the** Apostles' Creed.

'Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine'.

PRAYER TO THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom his love commits me here;
Ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide.

PRAYER FOR GRACE TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

O my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! Do thou bless me, I beseech thee, from thy holy tabernacle, which thou hast made thy dwelling-place in our midst, and grant, that, by the grace of this thy blessing, I may be strengthened and sanctified, preserved from all evil and brought to the most intimate union with thee, now and for ever.
Amen.

O Sacrament most holy; O Sacrament divine:
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.

Evening Devotions Before the Blessed Sacrament

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity now and forever. Amen.

O my God, I believe that thou art here present;
I adore thee, I trust in thee and I love thee with my whole heart;
I thank thee for all the blessings of this day.

Say the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed.

℣. Convert us, O God, Our Saviour.

℟. And turn away thy anger from us.

℣. O God, come to my assistance!

℟. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

SHORT LESSON: I PETER V. 8-9

'Brethren, be sober and watch: because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist ye strong in the faith.'

℣. But do thou, O Lord, have mercy on us.

℟. Thanks be to God.

℣. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

℟. Who hath made heaven and earth.

CONFITEOR

I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through

my own most grievous fault.
(Here examine your
conscience.) Therefore I beg
blessed Mary ever Virgin,
blessed Michael the Archangel,
blessed John Baptist, the holy
Apostles Peter and Paul, and all
the Saints, to pray for me to the
Lord our God.



CONTRITION

O my God, who art infinitely good and deserving of all my love, I earnestly and humbly beg pardon for all the sins that I have committed against thee; I detest them all; I am heartily sorry for them, because by them I have offended thy infinite goodness and perfection. I firmly resolve with the help of thy grace never more to offend thee and to carefully avoid the occasions of sin.

PRAYER FOR A HAPPY DEATH

Divine Jesus, incarnate Son of God, who for our salvation didst vouchsafe to be born in a stable, to pass thy life in poverty, trials, and misery, and to die amid the sufferings of the cross, I entreat thee, say to thy divine Father at the hour of my death: 'Father, forgive him,' say to thy beloved Mother: 'Behold thy Son,' say to my soul: 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' My God, my God, forsake me not in that hour! 'I thirst;' yes, my God, my soul thirsts after thee, who art the fountain of living waters. My life passes like a shadow, yet a little while and all will be consummated. Wherefore, O my adorable Saviour, from this moment, for all eternity, 'into thy hands I commend my spirit.' Lord Jesus, receive my soul. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Most holy Virgin, mother of the Incarnate Word, treasure-house of grace, and refuge of us wretched sinners, with lively faith we have recourse to thy motherly love, and ask of thee the grace of ever doing

God's will and thine. In thy most holy hands we place our hearts, and of thee we ask health of body and soul; and as we have the sure hope that thou, our loving Mother, wilt hear us, we say to thee with lively faith: Hail Mary (**three times**).

Let us pray.

Defend, we beseech thee, O Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever virgin, thy servants from all infirmity; and mercifully deign to guard them, prostrate in the sincerity of their hearts before thee, against the snares of the enemy. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER TO JESUS IN THE TABERNACLE

O Divine Jesus, lonely tonight in so many tabernacles, without visitor or worshipper, I offer thee my heart. Oh! may its very beating be a prayer of love to thee. Thou art ever watching under the sacramental veils. In thy love, thou never sleepest, and thou art never weary of thy vigils for sinners. O loving Jesus! O lonely Jesus! may my heart be a lamp, the light of which shall burn and beam for thee alone. Watch, Sacramental Sentinel, watch, for the weary world, for the erring soul, and for thy poor child!

O Sacrament most holy; O Sacrament divine:
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.



Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you: never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.