

## Eucharistic Devotion & Prayer

My name is Frank Tremmel. Since many of you don't know me I should give you some background about me so that you know where I am coming from. I grew up in a family that was not Christian in the sense that we never went to church. I was baptized as a baby. I even made my First Holy Communion when I was ten years old. I remember going to church only on that one day with my mother. But because I didn't discern the body of Christ, it had no effect on me whatsoever. When I was 16 I was confirmed right before my 17th birthday. The priest that gave the instructions to us was very lenient and I thank God for this. That he let some of us non-believers go through with it, those of us who skipped classes and didn't listen. Because, when I was confirmed in 1950, I received two tremendous gifts. The first was a conscience, which I didn't think was such a great thing. I mean, it ruined my summer as far as girls were concerned. The second gift I received was an insatiable desire to know if God was really, really real. At this time in my life I considered myself an atheist. God, Jesus Christ, did not exist in my life.

In October of 1950, I was walking home around 11 o'clock at night. We lived on a beautiful island at the mouth of Lake Erie where the Detroit River runs into Lake Erie. The winds were blowing, the waves were slamming against the shore and it was a full moon. Canada was about two and a half miles across the water and the lighthouse was about a mile and a half away. I remember the lighthouse and the light turning and as I looked up there was a flock of Canadian geese flying overhead. In that instant, God became real to me. God touched me in such a way that I could hardly walk the rest of the way home. When I got into the house, I just fell down on my knees by my bed. I began to cry and I knew God was real. I knew, because he was real, that I had to accept him into my life and my whole life changed that night.

The next day which was a Saturday, in the afternoon, I went to confession and when the priest told me to say so many Our Fathers and so many Hail Mary's, I told him quite honestly I did not know how to say Our Fathers and Hail Mary's so he said, "Just go up in front of the statue of our Blessed Mother and kneel there and pray the best you can." I did not know Mary, but I went up and a candle was burning. The church was very dark, and as I looked up at her, to this day I know, she smiled upon me. I immediately fell in love with her and she is the one that brought me to Jesus.

Nine months later, I entered a Trappist monastery. I spent ten years as a Trappist monk, from 1951 to 1961, and then because of ill health, a death experience and a gradual realization that God wanted me to do something else, I received a dispensation from Rome and left. The woman I married used to take me by the hand when I was two years old and she was six, and take me to the candy store in the Bronx. We have two daughters and I belong to this Prayer Group (The Body of Christ) here in Metuchen and have been a member for almost 30 years.

I'm involved in teaching in my parish church, St. John's in Clark. I'm also an hour coordinator at St. John's, because we have perpetual adoration and have had it for almost seven years. We were the first parish in our state to have perpetual adoration. Thanks to our monsignor, and thanks also to Mother Teresa who asked him to have perpetual adoration. When he became a pastor he started it, and I've been blessed in my own life that right from the beginning, I have been able to adore Jesus every morning. I am able to go every morning from 6 to 7 and then from 7 to 7:30, we have a Mass. So tonight, I'm going to talk to you about this and I'm going to do it with stories. Jesus always taught with stories. A parable is a short story that brings out a moral truth and that's how Jesus taught, and so I want to use stories because if you forget everything else I said to you tonight, you will remember the stories. The stories will stick with you and the story will lift you up and the story will move you and the stories will strengthen your faith and so we begin.

I wish I could speak to you in terms that would really penetrate your hearts and your minds, really move you, not in theological terms at all but simply perhaps like the Cure of Ars. That simple unlearned priest who would never have made it to the priesthood today, who would never have made it in his time if it wasn't that he had a pastor who had some pull and helped him to get ordained. A priest who was so holy, so close to Jesus and Mary that he is considered the greatest parish priest that ever lived and he is the patron saint of all parish priests. They said, "Where are we going to put this priest? He's really too simple to put anyplace". So they sent him to Ars. Ars were a dead parish. The church was empty. At one time they had put sheep and cows in the church. There had been straw and manure on the floors. The tabernacle was empty. The altar was not used for many years. The Revolution & Napoleon had almost succeeded in destroying the church in France, and it was a renegade priest who baptized the Cure of Ars. But baptism is a Sacrament. It doesn't matter who the person is that baptizes, because it is Jesus who baptizes.

Now, when he got to Ars, someone said to him with bitterness, there's absolutely nothing to do here, and so he replied, "That means there is everything to do" and he set about it. He cleaned the church, the floors, the altar, and the tabernacle. Put the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, set up the tabernacle candle and then got up at 2 AM every morning. He would go to bed at 10 PM and get up at 2 AM. He didn't eat. He would go and pray near the altar. He would say his office. He would say the Rosary. He would pray for his people, read books on the saints and then prepare for Mass. After Mass, he would make his thanksgiving and stay in church praying till noon. A 10-hour holy hour every day. He gave very simple homilies. Every Sunday he told the people that came, "If you only knew how much Jesus loves you. If you only knew how important you are to Jesus. If you only knew how merciful and loving and kind and how much he wants to be with you, you would simply die of happiness. And he would point to the tabernacle and he would say Jesus is really there. The living Jesus, who has risen from the dead and he is there for you. Not for himself. He is there for each one of you and he loves you so much that that's what happened to him on the cross.

Then he would cry when he told them how much Jesus loved them and the people began to change. It wasn't long that all of France came to that little church and then he would spend anywhere from 10 to 16 hours a day hearing confessions. There was a lawyer at the time, a very important Parisian lawyer who had lost his faith and considered himself an atheist and he went down to Ars simply to mock the priest, to make fun of what was going on, to laugh at these people. He said that when he looked at the Cure of Ars, for the first time, he saw God in the face of a man. That's what ten hours of adoration every day does. He was totally, completely converted, He went to confession, he went to Mass and he came back to Paris a totally changed person for the rest of his life.

There was another very great priest at the time of Cure of Ars, Lacordiere. Probably one of the most eloquent speakers of the day or of any time. He was kind of like the Bishop Sheen of his time. When he spoke at churches in France, people came from all over just to listen to him and the churches would be packed, standing room only. One day someone asked him if it made him feel good to be such a great and popular speaker? And he said, "No, it doesn't make me feel good. I feel terrible. Because when I speak, everyone says, 'look how intelligent Lacordiere is, what a good speaker he is. Look what a great theologian, how he can explain everything to us' and "When the Cure of Ars speaks everyone says, 'how much Jesus loves us', 'how real Jesus is', 'how merciful and kind Jesus is'.

Brothers and Sisters, that's preaching. When people come back to church because they realize how much Jesus loves them and how real he is in the Blessed Sacrament, the reality of his presence; and that reality is almost 2,000 years old in our church.

I would like share with you some thoughts from St. Paul to the Corinthians. In 1st Corinthians, and Corinthians was probably written around '57 or '58, maybe seven or eight years after the gospel of Matthew. It's one of the earliest pieces of scripture from the New Testament that we have. So it's the very beginning and Paul says, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? And the bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?" And then in Chapter 11 of 1st Corinthians, he says, "For I have received from the Lord Jesus, what I also handed unto you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, took a loaf of bread and giving thanks, broke it and said, 'take this and eat: this is my body which shall be given up for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup also after supper saying, 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.' Therefore whoever shall eat this bread and drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." Here we have, fully stated, the doctrine of the apostles and the faith of the infant church in the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Those words "guilty of the body and blood". You could not be guilty if you merely ate a little bread or drank a little wine as a picture or representation or memorial of the Last Supper. No one can ever be guilty of homicide if he merely does violence to the picture or statue of a man without touching the person of the man. St. Paul's words would be meaningless without the dogma of the real presence and so our belief in the Holy Eucharist goes all the way back and that belief was not even contested by anyone that wrote. It's true the Aryans didn't believe that Jesus was God. So naturally, they wouldn't believe in the body and blood, but all of the Fathers of the Church, are in total and complete agreement on the reality of the Eucharist.

Now, the testimony of the Fathers of the Church follows upon that of the apostles. The earliest witness is St. Ignatius. For a long time in the early Church, his writings were declared to be part of the epistles because he wrote so early. He, himself, was a disciple of two of the apostles, St. Peter and St. John, and he also was one of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. He saw him after the resurrection.

Eight of his epistles we still have with us. He wrote ten. Two are missing. He says, "I desire no perishable food. I desire the Divine bread, the bread of Heaven, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I desire his blood which is never failing charity, life eternal".

St. Irenaeus wrote around 147, he was actually a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John. So he's a very early Church Father. He writes, "We offer to God the bread we have blessed and the chalice we have blessed and we call upon the Holy Spirit that he may cause the oblation of bread to become the body of Christ, This wine His blood in order that he who receives these gifts may obtain remission of sin and everlasting life."

The Fathers of the Church who assembled at the 1st Council of Nicea in 325, there were 300 of them, declared "We must not confine our attention to the bread and the chalice offered upon the altar, but we must raise our hearts upward and perceive by faith the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, who is sacrificed upon the altar in an unbloody manner by the priest; and when we truly receive his precious body and blood, we must firmly believe that this is the actual pledge of our resurrection." There are many more testimonies I could give from the Fathers of the Church. These are just a few.

I'd like to end this section with some thoughts on transubstantiation. The IV General Council of the Lateran defined transubstantiation in 1215, and it means this: That the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly contained in the Sacrament of the Altar by transubstantiation. Transubstantiation is a changing across from one substance to another substance. Take the word "transformation". A carpenter can take a piece of wood and transform it into a piece of furniture. That's transformation. In transubstantiation, it's a question not of another form or another Shape, but literally another substance. We have this in nature. Hydrogen and oxygen are two gaseous

substances, but we know that if I mix two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, I have common water the stuff of all of life. So also transubstantiation changes the very substance of the bread and the wine into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. When hydrogen and oxygen are changed into water, they lose their gaseous appearance and they take on the substance, the appearance of water. When the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus, there is a complete change. There is no longer bread and wine. However, with our human eyes, we see bread and wine. That's where our faith comes in. It is faith in Jesus'

word that tells us that this is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, even though I see bread and wine. After the consecration, there is no bread and wine on the altar, even though it looks like bread and wine. It is the body and blood of Jesus Christ. It is so important that you understand this truth.

One of the main points of every retreat and homily that Bishop Sheen ever gave was an effort to inspire everyone to make a daily holy hour. Before he died he was interviewed on T.V. The question he was asked was who inspired and influenced him? Was it a Pope, a Cardinal, a Bishop, a Priest, or perhaps a Sister? Bishop Sheen said No. The one who inspired him to make a daily holy hour was a young girl. When the Communists took over China they went to one parish and locked up the priest in his own house. That became his jail. Then they went to the church, broke into the Tabernacle, threw the Sacred Hosts on the floor and left. They did not see a young girl kneeling in prayer. She was too small to notice. That night she came back, quietly sneaking past the guards at the priest house, before entering the dark cold church. There she knelt in a holy hour of prayer before going into the sanctuary to receive her Lord and her God in Holy Communion. At that time Communion was still on the tongue and once a day was all that was allowed. For this reason the little girl came back every night until all of the sacred hosts were consumed. She bent down to the floor and received Jesus on her tongue. The parish priest witnessed all of this from his window. The priest knew exactly how many hosts were in the ciborium because it was he who counted them and consecrated them. When the last host was consumed on the thirty-sixth night the little girl was discovered by the guards as she was leaving. They grabbed her and beat her to death. The priest lived to tell the story. When Bishop Sheen heard it as a Seminarian, he made a promise to God to make a holy hour everyday during his entire priestly life, a promise he kept until he died at the age of eighty-two.

No matter where he was in the world, he would find a Catholic Church and somehow get into it. A couple of times he broke in and one time he was arrested. But he would make his Holy Hour. He never missed except when he was sick, and he spent his life encouraging people to make a Holy Hour. I've been asked can a Holy Hour substitute for a Mass? No! But Bishop Sheen said something, which I think, is very important and I think it's a tremendous help to all of us. How many people here go to daily Mass? Raise your hand. Many of you do go to daily Mass. Now, Bishop Sheen says a religious should make a Holy Hour that's separate from all the other things that he does, whether it's Mass or saying his office, although he could say his office during a Holy Hour. But for a layperson it's

different. He said God would be infinitely pleased if a lay person would just get to Church say a half an hour early and then go to Mass. You would have a Holy Hour. You would be with our Lord for an hour. Is that hard to do? I don't think so. You know, it really isn't. I know people that do that right now. I know other people who, because we have perpetual adoration, will come to our 7 AM Mass in the morning and then after that Mass go and spend another half an hour with Jesus and then go into work.

So it's not impossible. It takes a sacrifice. We have to die to ourselves. But it can be done. I really believe that God wants to speak a word to you regarding Eucharistic Adoration. And I believe the word that he wants to bless each and every one of us with is a deeper faith in Jesus as our Eucharistic Lord. After almost seven years of Eucharistic Adoration, I am convinced, this is the place where you grow in holiness.

Don Bosco once had a dream. About 150 years ago, he had this dream and in this dream, he saw an immense sea on which there was a great many ships arranged for battle against a larger and taller ship. The tall ship, the great ship was the Catholic Church. The other ships was all those who attack the Church and some who defend it, and in the midst of this endless sea stood two great columns; one very high column on top of which was a statue of the Immaculate Virgin at whose feet a large inscription read "Help of all Christians" and on the other great pillar, even higher, was a huge Host. Underneath it, it had the inscription, "Salvation of all believers." Now, the flagship commander was the Pope. He stood at the helm and he strained every muscle in his body to try to steer that ship through this battle between the two pillars of great safety. And the entire enemy fleet closed in to try to intercept and sink the flagship. They bombarded it with everything they had, he said, books, pamphlets, bombs, firearms, false teachings, everything. The enemy ships had these great pointed prows and they would crash into this great ship and the breeze from the two columns would seal up the gashes and the ship went on and suddenly, the Pope was seriously wounded and fell, but those around him got him up and then he was shot again and he died, And there was a time of almost floundering for the Church and then a new Pope rose up and he steered the ship between the two columns and as soon as he steered the ship between the column of the Eucharist and the column of our Blessed Mother, the battle ceased. The other ships began to crash into one another and the Church was safe again.

I believe we are in this time. I believe this Pope has steered us between the two great pillars of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and Mary, our Mother. I believe this, because one of the first tasks our Holy Father did when he became the Pope, was to reinstate

Perpetual adoration in the Vatican. This first act that has ignited Perpetual Adoration through the world. I think the Philippines for the amount of people they have, have the most Adoration chapels. Is there anyone here from the Philippines? Raise your hand.

The Holy Eucharist will renew the Philippines. I don't care what kind of problems it has. Perpetual adoration will totally renew that country. There are probably over 800 Perpetual Adoration Chapels in the Philippines. Six years ago there were over 700, so I'm sure by now there's 800. And in NJ there are now 22 Perpetual Adoration Chapels. That's amazing. Louisiana has 58. Our country has over 675. Look at that. There are only three states that don't have Perpetual Adoration; one is Alaska, one is Utah and I can't remember the third one. There are over 6,000 Adoration chapels where they don't have perpetual adoration but they have some kind of Adoration, maybe it's morning to evening or morning to noon, but they have it on a regular basis, over 6,000 places in this country. This is what will change this country. This is what will change this world. Because that's where Jesus Christ is, in the Holy Eucharist, waiting for us.

Bishop Sheen always complained that Jesus had asked his apostles to spend an hour with him, and they didn't, and he asks the same thing of us today, to come, spend an hour a week with Jesus. I don't think that would take a lot out of our lives. We have time to go to the malls and spend hours shopping. We have time to run down the shore, some of us every weekend. We have time to watch TV for hours & hours. We have time for all these things. But can we spend an hour a week with Jesus? I think that's what the Lord is calling us to. I think that's why you're here today. That's the challenge that Jesus throws out to you and to me. Come spend an hour with me. Now, I know it's not easy. Jesus was first veiled in humanity and he is now veiled in the bread and in the wine and it took a lot of faith for those apostles to believe in the historic Jesus. We should never condemn the apostles for some of the dumb things they did. When Jesus came to his own village, they couldn't believe. He couldn't work any miracles there because they couldn't believe. Why couldn't they believe him? Because they saw him grow up. They saw him day in and day out and so they couldn't get past his humanity. It took faith for them to step out and it takes faith for us to believe that behind those

tabernacle doors is the creator of our universe, our Lord, our God, our Savior and I'm going to tell you to pray for that faith. If you are ever having problems with your faith, don't sit back and ignore those problems. The problems with your faith may be a call from God for you to have a greater faith. Don't be afraid to throw it up to God constantly, Lord, I don't believe. Help me, help me to believe. I can remember after my confirmation constantly saying to God, I don't believe in you, prove to me that you are real and he did it for me and he will do it for you. If you have a problem with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, talk to God, tell him about it. This person who is God, right there, has a human heart. He is not a man, he is God, but he has a human nature. He has a heart that looks just like your hearts. Think about it. Your heart is shaped just like his heart. I personally think his is bigger but other than that, it's exactly the same and that heart understands everything about you. He understands all your problems, all your hang-ups all the things that bother you, that don't seem to bother anyone else. He understands your relatives. He understands your coworkers. He understands your friends. He knows you through and through and in spite of all that, or maybe because of all that, He loves you passionately. It took tremendous passion to die on the cross.

When this new movie comes out on the passion that Mel Gibson did, watch it. Don't believe the entire negative hype; watch it. You're going to cry your eyes out. It's horrendous. It's going to actually be rated R for violence, but see it so you realize what he suffered just for you, for each one of you, because each one of you is a world unto them. Think of that. You are the only person in the world to God. He has espoused you to himself. He has taken you by the hand, he says in Isaiah, that you are his and he is your God and he loves you with all the passion that a man can have for a woman and infinitely much more because he is God. He is not a man. He has a human nature and is like us in every way, in all of our emotions and everything else, except in sin. Except for sin, so he's perfect. He doesn't make mistakes. You are never garbage to God. I don't care what you're going through, what you have done. God loves you that much. Don't ever forget it. From the silence of the tabernacle, Jesus calls out to us loud and clear and I like to say it in Spanish because it means more to me for some reason, *mi casa es tu casa*. My house is your house. My home is your home. Everything I have is yours. In John 7, Jesus says, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me. Let anyone who believes in me come and drink for as Scripture says from his heart shall flow streams of living water."

Pope Paul VI says that, the most efficacious way of growing in holiness is time spent with Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament. Reading about Jesus can

never replace time spent with Jesus. If you want to grow in holiness, not feel good holiness, but true holiness, you spend time with Jesus. Now, I read a lot. I have since I was a monk. I read almost every night between for at least 30 minutes before I go to sleep and I'm a fast reader and I retain what I read and I always have at least four or more books going. I don't recommend that. If you don't have a crazy mind like mine, it doesn't work, but you should do spiritual reading, it's important, and you should read scripture every day. At least a few minutes. If you can't read it without a commentary, get a commentary, but read it every day. It's so important, just a few moments every day and if you can read the Bible or good spiritual books in front of the Blessed Sacrament, that's the best way because then the teacher of teachers is teaching you. I guess what I am trying to say is that too many people read about Jesus and never really get to know Jesus because they don't spend time with Him.

Now, Perpetual Adoration is not easy. I'm not going to tell you it's an easy thing to do. You're going to go no matter how bad you feel. You're going to go no matter if you're sleepy or hurting. It's a commitment. Now, the Little Flower was quite upset because many times she always fall asleep when she was doing her Adoration and she was even tempted to leave the religious life and then Jesus told her that when she was sitting on her father's lap and fell asleep, did that mean that her father didn't love her? And she said no. So it is when you sleep in my presence he told her, I still love you. It is so important for us to spend time before the Tabernacle. This is the real school of holiness that all the saints went through. This is the place where we learn what Jesus wants us to learn. How to love God. How to increase our Faith and Hope in Him. How to love one another, especially by praying for one another.

I have come to believe that we are called to be representatives of everyone in our families and everyone we know and come into contact with before the Monstrance or Tabernacle. Gathering them all together and placing them in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. Presenting all their needs to God. Spiritual, physical, mental, emotional. If we don't do this who will? Their salvation may depend on our praying for them.

Time is running out and I would like to share with you, in closing, a short story. It's a story of Joseph. I've told this story many times but not all of you have heard it. The story I heard from Father Apostoli. The story takes place in North Africa. Joseph was an indentured servant, which is virtually a slave. It means you're working off a debt that maybe your parents had and you're working for this

person and you're basically his slave. Joseph was a convert to Catholicism and his master didn't like this, so his master made it so that he could not get away on weekends to go to Mass. The priest told him it's not your fault and if you can stop in during the week do so. So during the week his master didn't spy on him and Joseph would go every day to the Church and he would sit there looking at the tabernacle. The priest saw this and he asked him "What do you do, Joseph, when you sit in front of Jesus?" And Joseph said, "Well, Father, I am not a learned man. I don't know the prayers and I can't read. So I made up my own prayer and what I do is sit there and I say to Jesus; Jesus, Joseph is here. Jesus, Joseph is here. I just sit there for an hour or two and I just keep saying that prayer."

A few months went by and there was a horrible accident. There was a bus stop at the bottom of this hill. A truck lost its brakes at the top of the hill and came screaming down the hill crashing right through the pedestrians that were standing there. Joseph was one of them and as he lay on the pavement dying, one of the people there knew he was a Christian and the Church was nearby so he got the parish priest. The priest came and Joseph looked at him and said, "Father, you have brought Jesus, haven't you?" The priest said yes. The priest anointed him, gave him absolution and then the priest held the host up for Joseph to see, and in the silence, everyone there heard a voice, a different voice, a loving strong voice saying, "Joseph, Jesus is here. Joseph, Jesus is here." Brothers and sisters, we can never outdo our Lord. Whatever we do for Jesus, God will do a hundred times more for us. I know that those who are involved in Perpetual Adoration, when the time comes for them to die, Jesus will be there for them. Death will be a reward and a coming together with God forever. Amen.

This talk was given by Frank Tremmel at the Body of Christ Prayer Group.  
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