

How to fully live a Eucharistic life



As the Catholic Church in the United States embarks on the National Eucharistic Revival beginning with dioceses, parishes and small groups leading up to the great Eucharistic Congress of 2024, we may be wondering: What does this mean for me? How can I live a Eucharistic life?

When I entered the Daughters of St. Paul 37 years ago, I was introduced to praying daily Holy Hours of Eucharistic adoration. This wasn't completely foreign to me since my parents would bring my siblings and I to "make a visit," as dad would say, to the Blessed Sacrament at a Benedictine monastery that had perpetual adoration. I would kneel and tell Jesus my thoughts, concerns, and pray for special intentions (and then, after about 10 minutes, become quickly distracted by the images of Mary and the saints with rows of candles before them). I couldn't understand why many of the candles were unlit, so I decided to just light them all. I felt very satisfied when I finished, believing that Mary and the saints were happy with the virtual bonfire before them. I can imagine the nuns later wondering why the collection box funds didn't match the number of lit candles! My parents were deep in Eucharistic prayer and had no idea what I was doing! Yet somehow that experience shaped my life.

Besides actively participating in the Eucharistic liturgy, for my family, the "visit" with Jesus became a way for us to carry that experience of the Mass into our daily lives. As a young woman in religious life, I received that same explanation for making a daily Holy Hour. For our founder, Blessed James Alberione, living a Eucharistic life is about being

transformed by the presence of Christ to become his very life for the world. Our prayer leads us to evangelization. We receive him in Communion at the Mass and then spend intimate time with him during adoration, as if we are spending time with our best friend. Then we go forth and live in such a way that people see Jesus in us, being his witnesses in the world.

Alberione said that this time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament transforms us to live the life of Christ in everything we think, say and do. That means our daily tasks and circumstances take on a new perspective when we consider that Christ lives in us. Alberione says: "We need a blood transfusion. ... There must be communication, union, between the heart of Jesus and our heart so that his divine blood will flow into us until little by little our blood is replaced by his. When this union, this total fusion between our will and his will takes place, then, to put it briefly, our will is replaced with the will of Jesus; our feelings are replaced with the feelings of Jesus. We live in Jesus – this is love! We are lost in Jesus. It is no longer I who think, it is no longer I who feel; it is no longer I who act. It is Jesus in me! It is Christ who lives in me!"

Through a Eucharistic "visit" with Jesus, we take on the mind and heart of Christ, which is the goal of the Christian life – to become one with Jesus. The more we spend time with him, the more we learn how to trust, forgive and offer mercy. His humble presence in the small host shows us that true greatness is in giving of oneself in love. We, too, then become more selfless, patient and humble because Christ comes to live in us.

As the Eucharistic revival takes effect, we can each start now to spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, share with him our very lives and proclaim him to the world. In doing so, we are truly living a Eucharistic life.

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