

SAINT MAXIMILIAN MARY KOLBE AND EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

In preparing the series of articles on Eucharistic Adoration, one of the references used was the booklet *The History of Eucharistic Adoration* by Father John A. Hardon, SJ. On the cover was a picture of Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Ironically, Kolbe is not mentioned in the booklet. That led to the need to find out why his picture was on the cover.

Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe was one of the many Catholic priests and religious who were victims of the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. He is most widely known for his devotion to Mary and for starting the Militia of the Immaculate. A devotion less spoken about, but decidedly lived, every day of his life was his devotion to the Eucharist, particularly Eucharistic Adoration.

“Adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was a practice inherited from his parents and exercised to the very end of his life, a practice he promoted whatever the circumstances.” (Jerzy Domański, OFM Conv, *For the Life of the World, St. Maximilian Kolbe and the Eucharist*, 1982) Using his own words, taken from Father Domański’s book, will make it clear why Saint Maximilian’s picture was on the front cover of Father Hardon’s book. Something to consider while reading, Kolbe, like Saint Louis de Montfort and others, saw an immediate connection of devotion to the Mother, Mary, bringing a person closer to the Son.

During visits to the Blessed Sacrament, he always said to do/did three things. “Entrust yourself with the Lord in all; thank Him; pray to Him.”

“During visits to the Blessed Sacrament, unite yourself to sacrifices of the Masses being celebrated all over the world. Suffer in union with the sufferings of Jesus.”

“The more one promotes love for the Immaculate, the greater the number of souls one will gain for her and through her for the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

“God dwells in our midst in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. He remains with us until the end of the world. He dwells on so many altars, though so often offended and profaned.”



“If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.”

“The time during which Jesus abides in us under the sacramental species is the most precious of the entire day.”

“I go before the tabernacle. I engage in conversation with Jesus...Jesus is properly the source of grace and love.”

THE HOLY HOUR

During the middle of the 20th century, Eucharistic Adoration experienced a positive surge, one reason was Archbishop Fulton Sheen, the host of the top-rated television series “Life is Worth Living” of the early 1950s.



One topic he often spoke about was the resolutions he made on the day of his ordination. One was to offer the Holy Eucharist every Saturday in honor of the Blessed Mother. The other resolution was to spend a continuous Holy Hour every day in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. He said “The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white host.”

In *Treasure in Clay: The Autobiography of Fulton Sheen*, Sheen describes why a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament is so important.

First, the Holy Hour is not a devotion; it is a sharing in the work of redemption. Our Blessed Lord used the words “hour” and “day” in two totally different connotations in the Gospel of John. “Day” belongs to God; the “hour” belongs to evil. Seven times in the Gospel of John, the word “hour” is used, and in each instance it refers to the demonic, and to the moments when Christ is no longer in the Father’s Hands, but in the hands of men. In the Garden, our Lord contrasted two “hours” - one was the evil hour “this is your hour” - with which Judas could turn out the lights of the world. In contrast, our Lord asked: “Could you not watch one hour with Me?”. In other words, he asked for an hour of reparation to combat the hour of evil; an hour of victimal union with the Cross to overcome the anti-love of sin.

Secondly, the only time Our Lord asked the Apostles for anything was the night he went into his agony. Then he did not ask all of them ... perhaps because he knew he could not count on their fidelity. But at least he expected three to be faithful to him: Peter, James and John. As often in the history of the Church since that time, evil was awake, but the disciples were asleep. That is why there came out of His anguished and lonely Heart the sigh: “Could you not watch one hour with me?” Not for an hour of activity did He plead, but for an hour of companionship.

The third reason I keep up the Holy Hour is to grow more and more into his likeness. We become like that which we gaze upon. Looking into a sunset, the face takes on a golden glow. Looking at the Eucharistic Lord for an hour transforms the heart in a mysterious way as the face of Moses was transformed after his companionship with God on the mountain. Something happens to us similar to that which happened to the disciples at Emmaus. On Easter Sunday afternoon when the Lord met them, he asked why they were so gloomy. After spending some time in his presence, and hearing again the secret of spirituality - “The Son of Man must suffer to enter into his Glory” - their time with him ended and their “hearts were on fire.”