

AUGUST 29, 2014

Eucharistic Healing

by [KATHLEEN BECKMAN](#)

(Source: www.CatholicExchange.com)

I Thirst

Among many Catholics there is a privation, a sense of absence and even estrangement from true communion with God. This is a paralyzing reality among some believers. How can this be when Jesus is *always and truly present* in the Eucharist, on the altars and in the tabernacles of the world? Jesus hasn't abandoned us; He is truly and perpetually present. In His Presence there is healing.

Often we claim to be looking for God, but our back is turned to Him as we look to people and places where God is not found. We have to turn around to look at Jesus — face-to-face in the Eucharist — to make sense of the madness of the world all around us.

There is a *great thirst* among God's people, but the thirst of Jesus is far greater. The Heart of the Eternal High Priest is not fickle like the human heart. The Church's initiatives, including the crusade of prayer for priests suggested by the Congregation for the Clergy, will be fruitful only if we fall in love with Jesus in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the deepest, most life-changing encounter with Jesus the High Priest.

The name *Jesus the Eternal High Priest* is intimately related to *His hour* when in Gethsemane Jesus prayed to the Father and to His perfect sacrifice on the altar of the Cross. Jesus is our High Priest, the victim of His own intercession for sinners.

The Eternal High Priest is a "victim offering" to God the Father for the ransom of humanity. Each ministerial priest becomes a victim offering also. Archbishop Fulton Sheen eloquently writes about this to his brother priests:

That moment when the priest lifts up the Host and the Chalice, he is at his best. A bride and groom are at their peak of loveliness and lovability at the moment of marriage. Love is said to be blind because it sees no faults in the beloved. God's love becomes blind at this moment. He sees us through "the rose-colored glasses" of his Son. Never again will we appear as priestly, as victimal, as deserving of salvation, as we are when the Father sees us through "the rose-colored glasses" of the Body and Blood of his Son as we lift Host and Chalice to heaven. During this holy action, we priests become holy (Exodus 39:29). But we are also victims. We do not just *offer* Mass; we are also *offered*. (*Those Mysterious Priests*)

If we take time to ponder these sublime truths of our Faith, we are struck with awe at the gift of God. He loved us into being, ransomed us from sin and death by laying down His life so that we can live forever, and then perpetuates Himself in the ministerial priesthood so that we can encounter the living Jesus made present by His priests.

The letter to the Hebrews says, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." What does it mean to hold

fast our confession? We confess that Jesus is Lord; we bear witness by our life and our good works. How can our confession of faith and love for Jesus be convincing if we are not encountering him?

The Healing Power of Eucharistic Contemplation

Communing with the Divine Lover of our soul becomes irresistible joy, not labor. The words of Bl. Teresa of Calcutta inspire us:

“When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now.” (Quoted in *At the Altar of the World: The Pontificate of Pope John Paul II through the Lens of L’Osservatore Romano and the Words of Ecclesia de Eucharistia.*)

In 2003, Pope John Paul II laid out a plan for the New Evangelization that starts with contemplating the face of Christ in the Eucharist stating that he would like to “rekindle Eucharistic amazement.” The Eucharist is the central provision of God for interior renewal and inner healing.

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household, beautifully writes about the healing power of “Eucharistic contemplation”:

Eucharistic contemplation also has an extraordinary power of healing. In the desert God ordered Moses to raise a bronze serpent on a pole. All those who were bitten by poisonous snakes and then looked at the bronze serpent were healed (cf. Numbers 21:4-9). Jesus applied the mysterious symbol of the bronze serpent to himself (John 3:14). What we should do, then, when afflicted by the venomous bites of pride, sensuality, and all the other illnesses of the soul is not to get lost in vain considerations or seek excuses, but to run before the Most Blessed Sacrament, to look at the Host and let healing pass through the same organ through which evil so often passes: our eyes.

The only thing the Holy Spirit asks of us is that we give him our time, even if at the beginning it might seem like lost time. I will never forget the lesson that was given to me one day in this regard. I said to God, “Lord, give me fervor and I will give you all the time you desire in prayer.” I found the answer in my heart: “Raniero, give me your time and I will give you all the fervor you want in prayer.” (*This Is My Body*)

This is a message for our time because this type of healing is sorely needed. Our eyes are meant to behold what is holy, good, true, and beautiful. Unfortunately, worldly things that are unholy, false, and ugly bombard our eyes. Gazing upon the face of Jesus and contemplating His beauty, purity, and goodness is the healing balm we need for interior renewal, healing and deliverance from evil influences.

Although we may have good intentions, we often fail to pray or visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament because our daily lives are too busy. It is countercultural to come apart simply to be with the Lord. Learning how to *rest in God* is a gift of prayer called *contemplation*.

Contemplation derives from the Latin word *contemplatio*, which means, “rest.” In contemplative prayer, we rest in God’s love and let grace work in us.

Contemplative prayer leads to a deep encounter with God. Fr. Cantalamessa writes, “Contemplation is an eminently personal activity; it calls for silence and requires that one be isolated from everything and everyone to concentrate on the object contemplated and to be lost in it.” (*This Is My Body*, 25.)

Through the gift of faith, we discover the *Divine Somebody* whose love is incomprehensible, extravagant, healing, and infinitely perfect. An authentic encounter with Jesus in the silence of prayer leads to conversion of heart and inner healing. Constancy in prayer leads to perpetual conversion; absent prayer, conversion will cease. Through an authentic encounter with Jesus, we change from within. The process of encounter and conversion leads to engagement with Jesus and His Church.

There is an interior progression:

- *Encounter* with Jesus: personal experience of Divine Love that heals;
- *Conversion* of heart: movement toward God & away from what is not of God;
- *Engagement* with Jesus in a *relationship of love* that leads to *service*

An encounter with divine love is a meeting with Jesus, who laid down His life to save you and me — it must become personal and then communal. It is personal to Christ, who hung from the Cross and desires souls *to satisfy His perpetual thirst*. Jesus is *always* present for us on the altars of His Church, in the tabernacles of the world. He awaits us there, but He also initiates an encounter with us. What’s more, He also goes out after us — He pursues us to the ends of the earth, seeking after the human family like the Good Shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep to search for the one lost lamb. No matter where we may run or hide, He is there — inviting us to an encounter of love. This is the most touching thing to me. It is not that we have loved Him but that He has loved us first (cf. 1 John 4:10).

Eternal Father, graciously send us a new infusion of the Holy Spirit that we may desire to contemplate Your Son Jesus in the Eucharist and receive healing.

Author’s note: *This is an excerpt from a new book: **Praying For Priests: A Mission for the New Evangelization** now available from Sophia Institute Press.*

Kathleen Beckman, L.H.S., serves as Co-founder and President of the Foundation of Prayer for Priests (www.foundationforpriests.org). She is an author, radio host and retreat director who frequently speaks to priests, seminarians, religious and laity in the United States and abroad, emphasizing Eucharistic spirituality, healing and deliverance, and the New Evangelization. Frequently featured on EWTN TV and radio, Kathleen hosts the weekly program *Living Eucharist*, which airs internationally on Radio Maria.