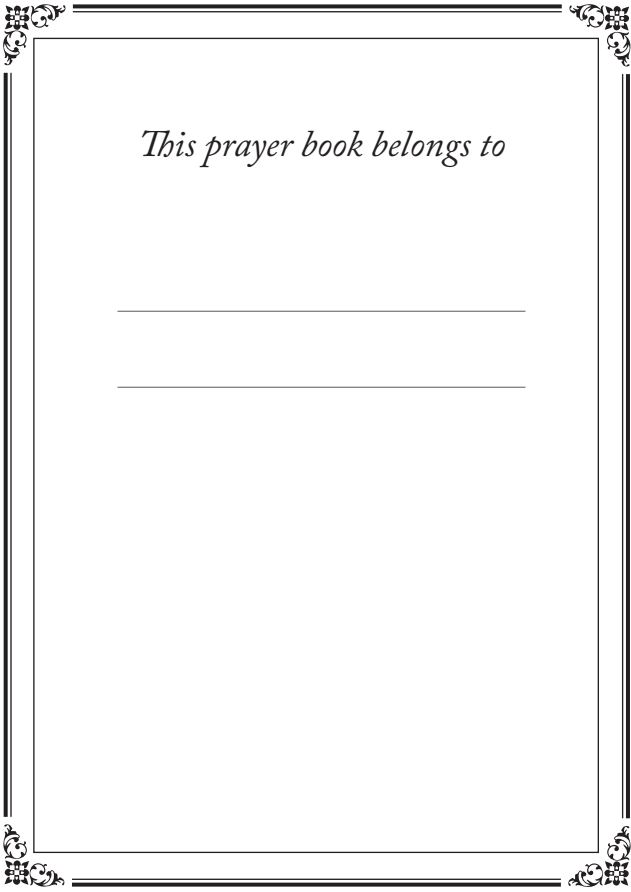


# Eucharistic Adoration



PRAYER BOOK



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# Eucharistic Adoration Prayer Book





# Eucharistic Adoration Prayer Book

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**Pauline**  
BOOKS & MEDIA  
Boston

*Nil obstat:* Reverend Thomas W. Buckley, S.T.D., S.S.L.

*Imprimatur:* ✠ Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Boston  
March 26, 2018

ISBN 0-8198-2401-1

ISBN 978-0-8198-2401-1

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Cover design by Rosana Usselman

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Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in China.

[www.pauline.org](http://www.pauline.org)

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

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## *Invitation*

*God longs to be close to you.* When we yearn for “Something More,” or struggle with an inner emptiness, we are responding to God’s desire for us. God sent his Son to draw us into a closer relationship. And Jesus’ gift of his very self in the Eucharist is an ongoing, amazing manifestation of God’s eagerness to be close to each of us.

Deepening our relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist is a privileged way to grow closer to God. Countless people have found fulfillment, wholeness, and healing in Eucharistic adoration.

*Eucharistic Adoration* is an introduction to adoration for those just starting this beautiful practice, as well as a resource and dynamic guide for those seeking to renew or deepen their adoration

in a way that fosters spiritual growth, wholeness, and holiness.

## The Perfect Prayer

For Christians, the Eucharist “is the source and summit” of life, the highest form of prayer, the greatest worship we can offer to God.<sup>1</sup> The Eucharistic celebration defines who we are as followers of Christ, unites us to Christ, and through Christ, to the Father. At Mass, we are invited to participate fully as the People of God acting in union with Christ, who is represented by the celebrant. By participating in the Eucharistic celebration, we fulfill Christ’s command, “Do this in memory of me,” gradually allowing the saving power of Christ’s love to touch and transform every aspect of our lives. From the Eucharist we celebrate, we are sent forth to take Christ’s saving message to a world thirsting for God’s love, justice, peace, and true freedom.

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1. Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11.

## Living the Eucharist More Fully

While the Mass is the communal worship of the People of God, the Church has long encouraged Eucharistic adoration as a privileged time to ponder the tremendous mystery of Christ's self-giving love that we celebrate at Mass. The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist continues after Mass. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle so that we may adore him. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states:

The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession (no. 1378).

Adoring Jesus in the Eucharist draws each of us deeper into the Paschal Mystery, strengthening our desire to share in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Adoration is not a substitute for the Mass, however. Rather, it's a way to deepen how we celebrate the Mass and live it in our daily life. Our

adoration leads us back to the Mass better prepared to appreciate its meaning and beauty. We more readily recognize the presence of Christ in the Word of God, in the priest, in the community, and in the Eucharistic bread and wine, in which we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion.

## Invitation to Wholeness

Today more than ever, people experience fragmentation in their lives. Too much information and too many opportunities pull us in so many directions that we are afraid we'll "miss out." Between work and home, church and school, public life and personal life, we often hide our true feelings and play different roles depending on where and with whom we find ourselves. We may feel split between our "real" and our "virtual" lives. This split poses a challenge for living a spiritually aware, integrated life that is centered on God.

Interiorly, we can feel also disconnected: our thoughts lead us one way while our feelings pull us

in another. Too busy and overstressed, we tend to ignore or put off what takes more energy to deal with. We take shortcuts. We ignore our feelings or act against our better judgment, instead of doing the hard work of taking into account *both* what we feel and what we think. With the many demands on our attention today, the need to integrate all the aspects of our lives is always more urgent.

Silent Eucharistic adoration offers many opportunities for bringing spirituality into our everyday lives. In the early twentieth century, God inspired the founder of the Pauline Family, Blessed James Alberione, to develop a holistic spirituality that fosters the harmonious integration of all the aspects of ourselves and our lives. Central to his spirituality is a simple, Christ-centered, and Scripture-based plan for Eucharistic hours of adoration that is valuable for both the beginner and the experienced. Blessed James Alberione's integrative and holistic approach to spirituality challenges our tendency to live a fragmented life, and urges us to integrate even those aspects of our lives that we hide from others, due to embarrassment or shame. In the face of all this,

Alberione's spirituality is a welcome invitation to integration and wholeness. Jesus invites us to drop our masks in front of him and, in the comfort of his love, to come to appreciate and respect our deepest, truest selves. Secure in his love, we can open ourselves to the transforming power of his grace in all areas of our lives. Then we can gradually become ever more faithful instruments of his love for transforming the world.



## *Pauline Spirituality*

**B**lessed James Alberione (1884–1971) was an Italian priest who understood the value of Eucharistic adoration. He founded five active religious congregations, and personally directed them and guided their apostolic works.<sup>1</sup> In addition, he founded four secular institutes.<sup>2</sup> His hectic

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1. Father Alberione founded the Society of Saint Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul, who proclaim the Gospel through the media of social communication; the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, who are dedicated to the liturgical apostolate; the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who dedicate themselves to pastoral work; and the Sisters of Mary, Queen of Apostles, who work to promote and guide vocations to the priestly and religious life.

2. These are the Institute of Jesus the Priest for diocesan priests, the Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel for lay men, the Institute of Mary Most Holy of the Annunciation for lay women, and the Institute of the Holy Family for married couples.

schedule would seem to have left little room for adoration, yet he daily spent four to five hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He often called the hour of adoration one of the most fruitful and formative spiritual practices, because it allows for personal assimilation of the richness of the Mass: “From this vital source, the Eucharistic Master, everything is given life.”<sup>3</sup> “[The hour of adoration] prepares one for Holy Mass and Holy Communion. Frequent encounters and familiar conversation with Jesus produce friendship, resemblance, and identity of thought, of feeling and of willing with Jesus.”<sup>4</sup>

At the heart of Father Alberione’s Eucharistic adoration lay his Pauline preoccupation with the person of Christ and the transformation of *our* lives into Christ’s. Father Alberione called the hour of adoration “the school of Jesus Master,” comparing

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3. James Alberione, *Thoughts*, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1982), 141.

4. James Alberione, *The Following of Christ the Master*, (Boston: privately published by St. Paul Editions, n.d.), 104.



it to the time the first disciples spent coming to know, love, and follow the loving Master who called them. He also sometimes referred to the hour of adoration as “the Visit,” signifying its intimate and intensely personal nature. The Visit with Jesus is a special time where we can simply be present before the Lord and tell him everything in our heart.

Father Alberione’s way of adoration is easy to use and very relevant for today in its rich use of Scripture, its flexibility, and its holistic approach. It can be easily adapted to personal prayer styles—including more active forms of prayer and silent contemplation. The holistic approach also challenges the individual to allow God’s Word to transform his or her attitudes, choices, and life.

The Pauline way of Eucharistic adoration is rooted in the spirituality of Saint Paul, which is both profound, yet simple to understand.

## **“It Is Christ Who Lives in Me!”**

Deeply devoted to Saint Paul, Father Alberione focused on the heart of Saint Paul’s spirituality,

which can be summed up in his own words: “It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me!” (Gal 2:20) Saint Paul’s Letters are full of references to how Baptism into Christ means sharing in Jesus’ saving passion, death, and resurrection—a sharing that transforms us and our entire lives.

Father Alberione placed this Pauline concept of a central, life-changing relationship with Jesus in the context of Christ’s profound self-description, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). The inspired genius of Father Alberione saw these distinct elements as intrinsically related to each other: as we enter more deeply into a personal relationship with Jesus, our lives are transformed by the One who is our Way, Truth, and Life.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Father Alberione wrote, “If one then moves on to the study of Saint Paul, one finds the disciple whose knowledge of the Divine Master is complete; he lives the whole Christ; he scrutinizes in depth the mysteries of his doctrine, of his heart, of his sanctity, and of his humanity and divinity: he sees him as Healer, Victim, Priest; he presents the whole Christ to us as he had already proclaimed himself to be: Way, Truth and Life. . . . This perspective encompasses the whole Jesus Christ; through this devotion Jesus Christ completely embraces and conquers

Beginning with the disciples' initial experience of Jesus as "Master" in the Gospel, Father Alberione chose this word to describe the personal and unique relationship Jesus has with each of his disciples.<sup>6</sup> A true master is not just an expert, but a teacher, guide, mentor, and model who has a genuine relationship with each disciple. The Master lovingly accompanies and guides each one on the path to the deepest fulfillment of our unique potential.

While the connotations of the word "Master" are not always positive, Jesus overturns any negative understanding of Mastery and power in a stunning

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the human person" (James Alberione, *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae*, (Rome, Saint Paul's, privately published, 1998), nos. 159–160).

6. In Alberione's words: "Devotion to Jesus Master sums up and completes all devotions. In fact, it presents Jesus Truth in whom to believe; Jesus Way who is to be followed; Jesus Life in whom we should participate. . . . Speaking of Jesus Master, we must keep in mind a much broader sense. He not only communicates knowledge, but he also transfuses his life into the disciples, making them similar to himself. He develops the divine life in them and guides them to eternal life" (Alberione, *The Following of Christ the Master*, 23).

reversal: “You call me ‘The Teacher’ and ‘The Lord,’ and rightly so, because I am. So if I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you, too, ought to wash each other’s feet” (Jn 13:13–14). Indeed, Jesus gave the term “Master” a whole new meaning: Jesus is Master in order to serve (see Lk 22:27). His Lordship over us *empowers us* to live with the dignity of children of God. Through Jesus, we receive the full freedom and dignity of friendship with God. As our true Master, Jesus is the One who gives the deepest meaning to our lives, and we are his inasmuch as he loved us into being, died to save us, and constantly reveals his loving care for us.

It is *as Way, Truth, and Life* that Jesus Master profoundly influences anyone who encounters him. Father Alberione linked Jesus’ self-definition to three essential aspects of the person: mind, will, and heart. Jesus sanctifies our minds by revealing the deepest Truth about God and the human person, our wills by being our Way to happiness, and our hearts by offering us the eternal Life for which we yearn.

## Jesus, the Truth that Sets Us Free

In the Gospels, it is easy to see how Jesus the Divine Master teaches us important truths so that we can live a happy and holy life. Jesus' words, teaching, incarnation, life, death, and resurrection—along with the ongoing teaching of his Spirit-guided Church—are radiant truths that most clearly reveal the mystery of God and our relationship with God. But Jesus' simple statement, "I am . . . the Truth" (Jn 14:6) does not just say he reveals truth; Jesus calls *himself* the Truth. Jesus *is* the Truth because it is in his very person that we discover the mysterious reality of God: Love emptying itself completely for the sake of the beloved. Jesus does more than tell us what the Father is like; he reveals the very face of God to us by how he relates to us.

When we begin to accept Jesus as the truth of existence and of our very lives, we begin to recognize and take responsibility for our indestructible freedom and dignity as beings made in the image of God. Jesus asks us to respond in faith by acknowledging and committing to the truth. We pray for

knowledge, wisdom, insight, and the grace to accept and integrate the truth into our lives. Faith in Jesus can transform our lives.<sup>7</sup>

Jesus is the ultimate Truth every human person searches for, the saving truth so desperately needed in our world today. Living our call to witness and proclaim Christ demands much of us. We do not need to be afraid, however. Jesus is with us in the struggle. He is not only, but also our Way.

## Jesus Way to the Father

At the Last Supper Jesus said, “I am the Way” inviting his disciples to follow him as *the Way to the Father*. In other places in the Gospel, Jesus offers himself as our model: “Learn from me” (Mt 11:29), “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12).

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7. “We honor Jesus Master, who made himself our wisdom, by placing ourselves humbly at his feet; by listening to what he left us in the Gospel and communicates to us through the Church; by accepting and believing all his teachings; by repeating to him with St. Peter: “You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God” (Alberione, *The Following of Christ the Master*, 29).

Jesus invites us to contemplate him as our Way and to live as he did.<sup>8</sup>

Jesus lived the perfect life, not because it made sense according to society's standards or because everything went his way, but because he fully lived his Father's will. By trusting completely in the Father's loving plan, and by actively cooperating with him in every aspect of his life, Jesus showed us how to live as the Father's beloved sons and daughters.

Jesus shows us the way to the Father both by his words and example, including the Commandments, the Beatitudes, and his new commandment of love. By fully taking on our human nature in his incarnation, Jesus united himself with every person and sanctified every genuinely human experience: his words, example, his entire life have meaning for

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8. "Jesus willed to be the first one to live the life that we should live; he willed to be the first one to walk the road which would lead us to the Father. . . . He made himself our Way to the Father, becoming our mediator and our brother. . . . From this derives the absolute necessity for us to imitate Jesus our model; to make ours his adoration, his thanksgiving, his reparation, his petitions" (Alberione, *The Following of Christ the Master*, 29).

each of us. Father James Alberione prayed, “Master, your life traces out the way for me. . . . The manger, Nazareth, Calvary—all trace out the divine way.”<sup>9</sup>

As we more closely follow Jesus Master, we discover that he is both the way to the Father and the way to wholeness. Jesus wants to heal our sinfulness and whatever woundedness we carry. He wants us to become free to genuinely love both ourselves and others, and live out our Christian vocation in its deepest sense—as an active presence of God in the world.

It is not easy to be a true follower of Christ, but Jesus assures us that he himself will be with us *and* that his grace will sustain us. We do not walk alone; Jesus walks alongside us.

## Jesus, Life for the World

The foundational belief and experience of Christianity is that Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, is our Redeemer. The second person of the

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9. James Alberione, *Until Christ Be Formed in You*, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1983), 37.



Blessed Trinity became man, suffered, died, and rose to save us and bring us into everlasting life. Jesus saves us in countless ways: from original sin, from our personal sins and sinfulness, from social sinfulness, from despair and the evil in the world around us, from the hell of endless separation from God. Ideally, in living our Christian life we experience Jesus' saving love daily in a profoundly personal way.

In saving us, Jesus offers a priceless gift that is unimaginable to the nonbeliever: sharing in his own life. "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in him . . . bears much fruit" (Jn 15:5). Jesus invites us to union with him and to participate in the eternal communion of love of the Most Holy Trinity. That's why the sacraments, beginning with Baptism and preeminently the Eucharist, are such incredible gifts. Through them, we receive and are nourished with the very life of God.<sup>10</sup>

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10. "We honor Jesus Life by asking him for the abundance of his life, his grace, his sanctity. In the presence of the magnificent virtue and sanctity that we discover in the life of the Master, we feel the necessity of resembling him and of praying for his help, and Jesus . . . will grant us the abundance of his Spirit, who will work in us 'until Christ is formed' in us" (Alberione, *The Following of Christ the Master*, 31).

To truly live in Christ means not just experiencing the fullness of human life but also *really* sharing in Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus' self-giving love transforms us so that we can love others in that same selfless way: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). This call to love often means sacrifice; certainly, it is another way we share in the mystery of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

In challenges and suffering, the disciple is consoled and strengthened both by the presence of Jesus and by his promise of resurrection and new life. For the disciple united to Jesus our Life, every form of death can be a mysterious passageway to new life. God does not will evil to happen but uses everything—even the most tragic circumstance (like the death of his Only-Begotten Son)—for our good and the good of others.

Jesus lovingly gives himself to us in the Eucharist in order to share his life with us, and through us, with others. In the Eucharist, Jesus calls us to be his light, his hands, and his heart for our world today.