

# Adoration allows for 'personal time'

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Perpetual adoration is established in a parish through the creation of an around-the-clock schedule of "adorers" who volunteer to spend at least one hour before the exposed Eucharist each month.

In reality, most parishes that offer perpetual adoration attract a pool of five to seven people who volunteer to "guard the Lord." The host is exposed at all hours except during celebration of Masses.

Many adorers recite certain prayers, such as the rosary or the Divine Chaplet of Mercy, before the exposed host and reflect on their personal concerns.

"I look at my hour, most of the time, as an hour of listening," said Stan Gutowski, one of two perpetual-adoration administrators at St. John of Rochester. "I probably spend more time sitting back, letting the Lord talk to me," added Gutowski, whose parish began the practice on Ascension Thursday two years ago.

Several adorers also noted their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially under her titles as Our Lady of Guadalupe and Fatima. These adorers explained that devotion to Marian prayer often accompanies a devotion to the exposed Eucharist.

Yet adorers stressed that there are few, if any, rules about who may serve as an adorer and how they may spend their hours with the Eucharist.

Practitioners come from all age groups and walks of life, and occupy their leisure time in such experiences as meditation and scriptural reading. Even some home-bound Catholics participate in the practice by devoting one hour each week to perpetual adoration — in spirit, if not in body.

Many adorers said presenting oneself for an hour before the exposed host in prayer and meditation can be likened to visiting a friend, except that this friend happens to be the Savior.

"Actually, it's a little quiet time you don't get with a large congregation," said Dolores Disano, a St. Theodore's parishioner who helps to coordinate adorers.

Disano's parish began perpetual adoration a little more than a month ago, and the practice allows area Catholics to spend "personal time" with Jesus, she said.

"As Catholics, we believe we can

talk to him," she said.

Perpetual adoration's appeal to Catholics lies in this emphasis on the relationship an individual adorer has with Jesus, according to Karen Kilpatrick, lead coordinator of perpetual adoration for St. Casimir's.

"Mass is the communal relationship we develop with our Lord — perpetual adoration is the personal relationship," she said. "When you pray, isn't it easier to go off alone?" she added rhetorically. Perpetual adoration "is personal time for you to go talk one-on-one with the Lord."

"They look at Jesus and Jesus looks at them," Judy Shanahan remarked of adorers.

A member of St. John of Rochester Church, Shanahan administers the parish's program along with fellow parishioner Gutowski.

By "looking" at Jesus present in the Eucharist, adorers feel peace, contentment and healing of a divine nature, Shanahan maintained.

Moreover, devotees of the practice consider perpetual adoration the ultimate complement to the Mass itself.

"To me, visiting the Blessed Sacrament is a continuation of receiving the Lord," Shanahan said.

Indeed, many of the adorers might concur with the interpretation put forth by Father Martin Lucia, spiritual director of the Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament, a U.S.-based religious order devoted to spreading perpetual adoration throughout the world.

"(T)he most compelling reason to create Perpetual Adoration Chapels in every community is because the Holy Spirit asks for it," Father Lucia wrote in his pamphlet *Could You Not Watch One Hour With Me — Perpetual Adoration*.

"During his Eucharistic discourse, Jesus made this unmistakably clear," Father Lucia continued, backing up his contention with the following passage from Scripture: "Indeed, this is the will of My Heavenly Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life."

Father Joseph DeLuca, a member of Father Lucia's order, visited St. Casimir's in Elmira last April and spoke on perpetual adoration. His words so inspired Southern Tier Catholics that more than 350 have volunteered for the vigil practice.

Along with the help of some private

donors, St. Casimir's is spending \$7,000 to construct within the church a chapel dedicated to perpetual adoration, according to Anne Rudzki, parish secretary. The parish hopes to have the chapel ready for use by mid-August, Kilpatrick said.

When the chapel gets going, a host of spiritual benefits will descend on Southern Tier Catholics, predicted Kilpatrick, who noted that perpetual adoration has served as a healing process for her own spiritual wounds.

A veteran of self-help support groups designed to aid participants in dealing with past hurts, Kilpatrick said she never found true spiritual peace until she developed a devotion to the Eucharist.

"There's no comparison between divine help and human help," she said. "Jesus does it all."

Her devotion to Christ has enabled her to bury past slights from others, she added, observing that a modern person turning to Jesus in the Eucharist for healing is no different than one of Jesus' ancient contemporaries reaching out to him for a physical or spiritual cure.

"You learn not to focus so much on yourself when your focus becomes Jesus," she asserted. "Past hurts, hurts from parents, spouses, things like that ... don't become so important."

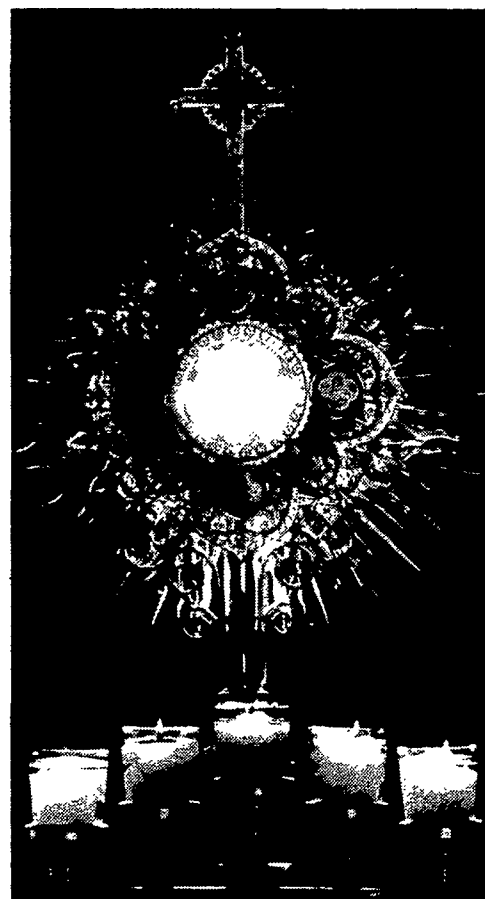
Helping to heal and make whole the lives of the elderly occupies the days of Patricia A. Wilder, a registered nurse who will help coordinate St. Casimir's perpetual devotion hours. Wilder credits her devotion to the Eucharist and to the sacrament of reconciliation for deepening her love for her in-home patients.

"I just don't talk the talk, I walk the walk of love and mercy," Wilder said.

She noted that her adherence to such Catholic devotion as perpetual adoration strengthens her tolerance and understanding of her elderly clients. In particular, she pointed to her increasing willingness to provide spiritual aid to patients who request such help.

"If there's a need for a priest, I feel comfortable securing that need for them," she said.

Not only will perpetual adoration lead Catholics to become more Christian in their daily lives, adherents claimed, it will also help them to make



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor  
This monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament has been perpetually on display at Fairport's St. John of Rochester Church since Ascension Thursday, 1990.

their daily lives more sacramental.

"I think one of the things I've seen is an increase in the number of people involved in things like daily Mass," Gutowski said.

Gutowski concluded his comments by naming what is probably at the heart of perpetual adoration's growing popularity in the diocese.

"The Eucharist is the physical reminder that the Lord is there," he said.

**EDITORS' NOTE:** For information on perpetual adoration, call St. Theodore's at 716/429-6811, St. John of Rochester at 716/248-5993, or St. Casimir's at 607/734-1622.

St. Casimir's also welcomes donations for construction of its perpetual adoration chapel. Send donations to: St. Casimir's, 1004 Davis St., Elmira, N.Y. 14901.

For information on nocturnal (nightly) adoration, call the Rochester Nocturnal Adoration Society at 716/586-5404. Some parishes outside of Rochester — including St. Francis of Assisi in Auburn — also offer differing forms of adoration. Contact your local parish for information.



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