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The place of Eucharistic adoration in the apostolate of
the laity in light of magisterial teaching.

Jessica Leach

M.Phil

2014

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<u>Introduction</u>	

The laity are called to a personal union with Christ, which flows from their vocation to holiness and the natural effect of such a union, which is the sharing in the Church's mission of evangelisation. As outlined at the Second Vatican Council in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the Christian vocation, be it for the laity or those consecrated to the ordained priesthood and religious life, is without exception a vocation also to the apostolate.¹

The apostolate of the layperson is two-fold: a life of prayer and a life of mission. The latter proceeds from the first, and is indeed fed, nurtured and made possible through a living union with Christ, nourished by a variety of spiritual aids common to the faithful, particularly an active participation in liturgy.² This thesis will examine the role Eucharistic adoration can play as a spiritual aid for the laity in living both their life of prayer and life of mission, in light of magisterial teaching. In examining the role of Eucharistic adoration as specifically regards the apostolate of the laity, this thesis will address a theological topic that has been largely overlooked since the Second Vatican Council.

For the purposes of this thesis, we will define adoration with reference to the principles and guidelines for adoration, as established by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. These acknowledge that adoration of the Blessed Sacrament can take different forms, the limits of which are not always easy to determine, but can be generally understood to include:

- a simple visit to the Blessed Sacrament: a brief encounter with Christ inspired by faith in the real presence and characterized by silent prayer;
- adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed for a period of time in a monstrance or pyx in accordance with liturgical norm;
- perpetual adoration or the *Quarantore*, involving an entire religious community, or Eucharistic association, or parish, which is usually an

¹ Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (18 November 1965), 2 (Hereafter AA).

² *Ibid.*, 4.

occasion for various expressions of Eucharistic piety.³ Thus, we can understand that Eucharistic adoration is a prayer made in the presence of the Eucharist, outside of the celebration of the Mass, be it with the Sacrament reposed within the tabernacle, or exposed for public veneration. Either of these modes of adoration may be made available within parishes, cathedrals or religious centres for a period of time each day or on a perpetual basis. As further instruction, the guidelines encourage silent prayer, reading of scripture, singing hymns, meditating upon the rosary, and Benediction as activities appropriate for times of adoration.⁴

While these guidelines are rudimentary, and few works of theology address Eucharistic adoration explicitly, the practice remains one of the most common in the Western Church and is ‘earnestly recommended’⁵ to the faithful. Indeed, as a devotional practice it has grown in popularity since the Second Vatican Council, and the body of commentary on adoration by the magisterium since the Council is considerable and its support for the practice resounding:

The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church ... It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.⁶

The emphasis from the magisterium since the Second Vatican Council on these two aspects of the faith, on adoration as a practice of ‘inestimable value’ in the spiritual life, and on the call of the laity to the pursuit of holiness, suggests that there is a need to establish whether an important link can be made between these two areas

³ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines* (December 2001), 165.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. English translation: *On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church* (17 April 2003), 25. (Hereafter EE)

of renewal. As a considerable amount of the writing on this topic has come from the magisterium, particularly the teaching of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, it seems fitting to examine a link in the light of that teaching. Magisterial teaching, which is indeed an authority in the Church, should be meditated upon for the purposes of furthering our understanding of its teaching and ensuring that our interpretation is accurate and appropriated for the Church's mission.

With this in mind, and conscious of the amount of magisterial teaching on this topic, we can furthermore consider that a considerable portion of the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI on adoration has been addressed to the lay faithful. These correlating factors give weight to a study of adoration in the particular context of the laity.

This thesis acknowledges the need for a rigorous development in the theological study of adoration, but it does not aim to provide a comprehensive theological or historical study. Rather, it seeks to draw upon the magisterium's emphasis on the pastoral implications of a Eucharistic spirituality, specifically as it impacts upon the apostolate of the laity, and in doing so contribute to a richer understanding of the Eucharistic life of the laity. Subsequently, the thesis has been structured with the aim of giving an overview of that apostolate, of its central tenets of prayer, evangelisation and communion, and of the role of adoration in each of those areas.

As this thesis aims to examine adoration in relationship to these key areas of the lay apostolate, chapter 1 begins by giving a necessary overview and brief historical study of Eucharistic adoration. This overview is given particularly in regards to the relationship of adoration to the Mass, as the latter is the source and

summit of the faith⁷ and the font from which the Church's power flows.⁸ This chapter will seek to establish that the worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass, in adoration, is ultimately directed towards the Mass itself, and to demonstrate the importance of this in the lives of the laity. The chapter will also address and respond to some criticisms of adoration, in order to demonstrate that it is a rightfully esteemed devotion within the life of the Church.

Having sought to give an overview of adoration, chapter 2 aims to examine this particular type of prayer and its significance for the laity. As prayer is fundamental in the laity living an apostolic life, this chapter will highlight that importance and examine the particular role adoration can play. The chapter will consider the intimacy with Christ present in the Eucharist in adoration, the transformation that can subsequently occur, and the implications of a contemplative spirituality in the lives of the laity.

Chapter 3 will examine evangelisation, which is the natural effect of union with Christ through prayer. The chapter will outline the laity's call to mission and the Eucharistic nature of that call. By studying the relationship of adoration to evangelisation, the chapter will consider both the power of the Eucharist in mission and the impetus of evangelisation for the adorer.

Having examined the key tenets of the apostolate, prayer and mission, chapter 4 will consider the significance of communion for the laity and its implications on their Christian life. As the capacity of the Christian to respond to the apostolate is directly related to their communion in the Church, this chapter will seek to explore the

⁷ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964), 11. (Hereafter LG)

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*. English translation: The Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission (22 February 2007), 10. (Hereafter SC)

role adoration can play in that relationship. The chapter will also consider the broader implications of communion upon parishes, the whole Church, and the world, as it is ultimately for the communion of the world that the layperson themselves seek to live a life of communion.

Finally, chapter 5 will study Mary as a model of adoration for the laity. The decision to dedicate a chapter to examining Mary's life of adoration and its implications for the laity in responding to their call stem from her eminence as an adorer and missionary. The chapter will attempt to demonstrate that Mary's life of prayer and mission stemmed from her relationship to God, which was fostered through her adoration of Christ. By seeking to establish Mary as an adorer within the temporal reality, and as an eminent example of the missionary fruits of adoration, the chapter will emphasise the implications of this upon the way in which the laity can live the apostolate.

Drawing upon the recent writings of the magisterium, this thesis will examine the apostolate of the laity through the lens of adoration. Through an examination of the magisterium's emphasis on adoration, this paper proposes that adoration can play a significant role in living of that apostolate and seeks to demonstrate the body of Church teaching to support this proposal.

Chapter 1: The Mass, adoration, and the laity

Eucharistic adoration must be understood in relation to the Mass, which it is ultimately at the service of. With this relationship as its foundation, this chapter will seek to give an overview of the key aspects of adoration and the lay apostolate. This includes a review of the development of the practice of adoration, and its historical and theological foundations, which have significant implications in understanding the weight that can be given to the devotion today. The chapter will then examine how adoration prolongs and intensifies the celebration of the Mass and the impact of this, and its importance, upon liturgical participation for the laity. This will include a review of the importance of Eucharistic spirituality in the lay faithful, and a study of the Eucharistic spirituality of the Sacred Heart and the implications of this upon a laity that is called to transform the temporal order. Finally, to further lay a foundational overview of adoration, the chapter will outline and respond to criticisms of the devotion.

1.1 The development of adoration

While there have been significant theological developments over time, a vivid grasp of the Eucharist's central place in Christian life has existed within the Church from the time of Christ's ministry. We can see this in Christ's Eucharistic discourse holding a prominent place of the centre of John's Gospel, in his institution of the Eucharist being recorded with significance in the Synoptic Gospels, and in St. Paul's assertion that 'whoever eats of the bread or drinks of the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord' (1 Cor 11:27). Thus the Eucharist has always been held to be, and has been clearly defined as such since the Council of Trent, as 'truly, really, and substantially, the body and

blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ.⁹ To teach that Christ resides in the Eucharist as merely a sign or symbol is to be in schism with the dogmatic teaching of the Church.¹⁰

It is upon this sure foundation that spiritual writers can write so persuasively on the Eucharist as the cornerstone of Christian life. We can see this in the example of Frederick William Faber positing that the very presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the cause of the Church's spiritual triumph on the feast of Corpus Christi:

It is because she has Jesus Himself with her, the Living God, in the Blessed Sacrament. It is no commemoration of Him; it is Himself. It is no part of the mystery of the Incarnation; it is the whole mystery, and the Incarnate One Himself. It is not simply a means of grace; it is the Divine Fountain of Grace Himself. It is not merely a help to glory; it is the glorified Redeemer Himself, the owner and the source of all glory.¹¹

Development in the understanding and encouragement of adoration stems from the Eucharistic doctrine outlined at Trent, but it is not only an understanding of the past five hundred years. We can consider, for example, Church Father St. Augustine's assertion that, 'No one eats that flesh without first worshipping it. Not only do we commit no sin in worshipping it; we should sin if we did not.'¹² These words were echoed later at the Second Council of Constantinople in 533: 'Christ must be adored, for He is the Word of God, and He must be adored with the same adoration in His own flesh.'¹³

⁹ Council of Trent, *On the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist* (11 October 1551), 13th Session, can. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Frederick William Faber, *The Blessed Sacrament or, the Works and Ways of God* (London: Burns & Oates Ltd, 1861), 17-18.

¹² Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 73-98. Vol. III/18. (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2002), 98, 9.

¹³ Second Council of Constantinople (533), canon. 9.

Both Augustine and the Fathers of the Second Council of Constantinople express this necessity for adoration as a must and an imperative, rather than a choice, or even a worthy practice. While they are not referring directly to the act of Eucharistic adoration as we may understand it today, such an act seems to develop naturally, simply as a consequence of the belief in the Real Presence. It was this belief that had obvious repercussions for questions in the life of the Church, such as the housing of the consecrated bread. Throughout the first millennia of Christianity it had become common practice to reserve the Blessed Sacrament, firstly in the sacristy and then in a special place in the church itself, not only for protection against desecration but for the purposes of prayer, adoration, and to rightly acknowledge the presence of Christ in the tabernacle.¹⁴ By the 13th century, a natural result of this reverence was the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi by Urban IV, encouraging worship and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by all the faithful.

Three centuries later, the teachings of Trent make explicit that adoration is rightly owed to the Blessed Sacrament:

The only-begotten Son of God is to be adored in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist with the worship of latria, including external worship. The Sacrament, therefore, is to be honored with extraordinary festive celebrations (and) solemnly carried from place to place in processions according to the praiseworthy universal rite and custom of the holy Church. The Sacrament is to be publicly exposed for the people's adoration.¹⁵

Less than half a century after these conciliar statements were made, the Church ratified the Forty Hours Devotion, in which cathedrals and parishes would remain open for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at various times throughout the

¹⁴ 'Through real concomitance, due to the integral subsistence of the risen Christ in heaven, nothing less than the whole person of Christ is in the Blessed Sacrament.' Reinhard Hutter, 'Eucharistic Adoration in the Personal Presence of Christ: Making Explicit the Mystery of Faith by Way of Metaphysical Contemplation', in *Nova et Vetera* Vol.7:No.1 (2009), 207.

¹⁵ Council of Trent, *op. cit.*

year, a practice which continues throughout the world at this present time. Canon law requires churches to facilitate an opportunity for the faithful for daily prayer before the Blessed Sacrament¹⁶ and solemn exposition is recommended at least once a year in all churches and oratories that reserve the Blessed Sacrament.¹⁷

This thinking is prevalent in the Church today, to the extent that on the Feast of Corpus Christi 2013 Pope Francis called for all parishes to join in an hour of Eucharistic adoration at the same time, so that these prayers would be made in unison around the world.¹⁸ In calling for such an action, it can be seen that Francis places a significant emphasis upon adoration. This not only reflects the doctrinal basis for adoration but also the emphasis placed upon the practice since the Second Vatican Council, which has proclaimed it as central to the Eucharistic life of the faithful. Bl. Pope John Paul II commented upon the correlation between adoration and an active Eucharistic life in the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*:

The Magisterium's commitment to proclaiming the Eucharistic mystery has been matched by interior growth within the Christian community. Certainly the liturgical reform inaugurated by the [Second Vatican] Council has greatly contributed to a more conscious, active and fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice on the Altar on the part of the faithful. In many places, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness.¹⁹

1.2 Adoration at the service of the Mass

¹⁶ Can. 937: 'Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, the church in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved is to be open to the faithful for at least some hours every day so that they can pray before the Most Blessed Sacrament.'

¹⁷ Can. 942: 'It is recommended that in these churches and oratories an annual solemn exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament be held for an appropriate period of time, even if not continuous, so that the local community more profoundly meditates on and adores the Eucharistic mystery. Such an exposition is to be held, however, only if a suitable gathering of the faithful is foreseen and the established norms are observed.'

¹⁸ Year of Faith Public Statements by the Holy See. <http://www.annusfidei.va/> (accessed 20/05/2013)

¹⁹ EE, 10.

Adoration must be rightfully understood in relationship to the Mass, as it is from the Eucharistic liturgy, most especially, that ‘the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.’²⁰ The fundamental virtue, or grace, of adoration is that ‘this act of worship ... enables the faithful to experience the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully.’²¹

In addressing the need for the Eucharist to be central to the life of the faithful, the magisterium has repeatedly highlighted adoration as a ‘natural consequence of the Eucharistic celebration ... [which] prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself.’²² That is, adoration is not in competition with the Sacrifice of the Mass but rather a practice that allows the faithful to enter more deeply into the liturgical celebration. In his work on the Eucharist, *God is Near Us*, Ratzinger argues that:

Communion and adoration do not stand side by side, or even in opposition, but are indivisibly one ... A person cannot communicate with another person without knowing him. He must be open for him, see him, and hear him. Love or friendship always carries within it an impulse of reverence, or adoration. Communicating with Christ therefore demands that we gaze on him, allow him to gaze on us, listen to him, get to know him. Adoration is simply the personal aspect of Communion. We cannot communicate sacramentally without doing it personally. Sacramental Communion becomes empty, and finally a judgment for us, unless it is repeatedly completed by us personally.²³

Other spiritual aids such as, for example, *Lectio Divina*, spiritual reading, mental prayer, and the Rosary, are exemplary methods of prayer and preparation for

²⁰ Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (4 December 1963), 10.

²¹ SC, 67.

²² *Ibid.*, 66. See also: ‘Adoration outside Holy Mass prolongs and intensifies what has taken place in the liturgical celebration and makes a true and profound reception of Christ possible.’ Benedict XVI, *Angelus* (10 June 2007).

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 08/02/2013)

²³ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God is Near Us* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 97.

the Eucharist. However, adoration as the ‘personal aspect of Communion’ can have a central role in the faithful’s participation for the Mass and their communion with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI says, ‘without adoration as an act consequent to Communion received, this centre which the Lord gave to us, that is, the possibility of celebrating his sacrifice and thus of entering into a sacramental, almost corporeal, communion with him, loses its depth as well as its human richness.’²⁴

Crucially, this text references adoration as an act consequent to Communion received, because ‘this worship [adoration] is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.’²⁵ It is this link that makes adoration pre-eminent in the preparation of the faithful for Mass. As a tool, for want of a better expression, adoration is rightfully at the service of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Indeed, ‘care must be taken that during these expositions the worship given to the Blessed Sacrament should be seen, by signs, in its relation to the Mass.’²⁶ These signs include the monstrance being placed on the altar, the preference for exposing the Blessed Sacrament either before or after the Eucharistic celebration, and Benediction only ever being conducted by a priest or bishop.

1.3 Adoration and participation in the liturgy

The participation of the faithful in the liturgy should be that which is ‘fully conscious, and active.’²⁷ Benedict XVI writes about the impact of adoration upon participation in the liturgy in the encyclical *Sacramentum Caritatis*, and the effect of a

²⁴ Benedict XVI, Meeting with the members of the Roman clergy (2 March 2006). http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 05/02/2013)

²⁵ EE, 25.

²⁶ United States Catholic Conference, Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction on Eucharistic Worship*, Washington DC (25 May 1967), 60.

²⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *op. cit.*, 14.

‘lively’ Eucharistic faith upon the participation of the faithful in the liturgy, observing that ‘every reform has in some way been linked to the rediscovery of belief in the Lord’s eucharistic presence among his people.’²⁸ The experience of the Lord’s Eucharistic presence through adoration is so significant that St. Alphonsus de Ligouri termed it the devotion, after that of receiving the sacraments, ‘most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves.’²⁹

Adoration is so ‘useful’ because ‘Eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church’s supreme act of adoration.’³⁰ Indeed, as well as containing crucial times of adoration, in the act of the elevation of the consecrated host, the presentation of the Blessed Sacrament following the *Agnus Dei*, and directly before the individual reception of Holy Communion, the Mass is the source of all worship. For laypersons to be able to immerse themselves in the Mass on Sundays, and perhaps occasionally or even regularly throughout the week, they are called to have a spirit of adoration. As mentioned previously, this can be fostered through a variety of means of prayer and study, but it is evident that actual adoration of the Sacrament outside of Mass can only positively contribute to participation in the ‘ultimate adoration’ that is the Mass, in enabling a greater understanding of the worship due to God and thus experiencing ‘the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully.’³¹

1.4 The need for a Eucharistic laity

The importance of prolonging and intensifying the experience and understanding of the Eucharist is central in the apostolate of the laity, which is

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ Alphonsus de Ligouri, *The Holy Eucharist* (Brooklyn: Redemptorist Fathers, 1934), 116.

³⁰ SC, 66.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

ultimately an apostolate to holiness, through prayer and mission, for ‘the classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one.’³² This is no insignificant calling, particularly in a modern world where ‘conditions demand that [the laity’s] apostolate be broadened and intensified.’³³ These conditions, specifically, can be identified as including a departure from the ethical and religious order, the challenges to Christian life, a deprivation of freedom for priestly work, rapid progress in science and technology, and the change in the nature of interpersonal relationships.³⁴ The Council Fathers of Vatican II recognised that ‘while human progress is a great advantage to man’³⁵, un-checked progress has serious dangers: ‘individuals and groups pay heed solely to their own interests, and not to those of others. Thus it happens that the world ceases to be a place of true brotherhood ... the magnified power of humanity threatens to destroy the race itself.’³⁶

At the centre of this potential for destruction lies a lack of reverence for one’s fellow man, which results in the loss of human dignity, the diminishing of the value of life at every stage, the trafficking and prostitution of persons, and the use of the person as a means for profit with disregard to their inherent freedom. In the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II categorised these disturbing trends as reflecting a ‘culture of death.’³⁷ In considering how these significant challenges are to be combated, this paper looks to the writings of magisterium which have increasingly highlighted the need for the Church’s members to be seeking lives which are, at their heart, Eucharistic.

³² LG, 41.

³³ AA, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), 37. (Hereafter GS)

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. English translation: On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life (25 March 1995), 12. (Hereafter EV)

Indeed, as the Eucharistic celebration is rightfully placed in the centre of a Christian's life, so should 'the sacrament of Christ's charity ... permeate the whole of daily life.'³⁸ Benedict XVI writes that there is a need amongst the laity for 'a fuller understanding of the relationship between the Eucharist and their daily lives,' for a Eucharistic spirituality which 'embraces the whole of life.'³⁹ He charts the pattern of Eucharistic devotion, referring directly to the impact in the decrease in the practice of adoration:

... By concentrating the entire relationship with the Eucharistic Jesus in the sole moment of Holy Mass one risks emptying the rest of existential time and space of his presence. This makes ever less perceptible the meaning of Jesus' constant presence in our midst and with us, a presence that is tangible, close, in our homes, as the "beating Heart" of the city, of the country, and of the area, with its various expressions and activities.⁴⁰

By placing the Eucharistic Lord at the centre of 'time and space', be it through encouraging the faithful to spend time in the church with their attention given to the Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, or by exposing the Eucharist upon the altar to literally fill the place with his Presence, the Sacrament is not limited to its celebration. Rather, it can 'permeate the whole' of the lives of the faithful, which it ideally should do, for it is in this way that the Christian is a Eucharistic presence in the world. This is particularly true for the laity, who are called to daily live their vocation as a force of renewal for the temporal order. This Eucharistic presence, within the secular world, is supernatural in character, and implies that the very identity of the lay person ought to be Eucharistic:

The sense of the "secular" and of "worldly" presence implied in a *communio ecclesiology* thus indicates a dual unity of purpose for the laity: namely, by virtue of the new life in Christ given at Baptism, (a) to

³⁸ Benedict XVI, Homily on the Feast of Corpus Christi (7 June 2012).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 08/02/2013)

³⁹ SC, 77.

⁴⁰ Benedict XVI, *op. cit.*, 7 June 2012.

“restore to creation all its original value,” (b) by drawing all things, in and through Christ and his Eucharist, to the Father, “so that God might be all in all.” The proper identity—and mission—of the lay faithful, in a word, consists in being a eucharistic presence at the heart of the “secular,” a presence which, precisely in its supernatural character, restores to creation its rightful secular meaning—its natural integrity, or “*iusta autonomia*” (GS, 36), as created.⁴¹

Ratzinger describes the Eucharistic congregation as one ‘constantly imbued with the waiting presence of the Lord, and with our silent readiness to respond.’⁴² This congregation ‘sent out’ becomes a Church that is eager and ready to be that Eucharistic presence in homes, workplaces, times of recreation, relationships and social activity, so that, through them, God might ‘be all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28). An authentic Eucharistic spirituality for the layperson is one imbedded in the world. The Lord himself demonstrated this in his incarnation, which did not result in a museum-contained God, a statue-like deity to be visited and paid homage to with external poses and empty prayers, but a Saviour who instead entered into the very midst of the human condition, and left his own flesh to be food for the faithful to be literally incorporated into them.

Thus, it is in the experience of the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of the Incarnate Word that Christ’s Real Presence can be incorporated into the humanity of the layperson, into the experience of a life lived, like Jesus, in the midst of the world. John Paul II posits this call in the light of the emphasis of the Second Vatican Council:

In its penetrating analysis of “the modern world”, the Second Vatican Council reached that most important point of the visible world that is man, by penetrating like Christ the depth of human consciousness and by making contact with the inward mystery of man, which in Biblical and non-Biblical language is expressed by the word “heart”. Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique

⁴¹ David L. Schindler, ‘Toward a Culture of Life: the Eucharist, the “Restoration” of Creation, and the “Worldly” task of the Laity in Liberal Societies’, *Communio*, Vol.29 (2002), 680.

⁴² Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 96.

unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his "heart".⁴³

1.5 The Sacred Heart and its implications for Eucharistic spirituality

Dennis J. Murphy MSC elaborates on the use of the word 'heart', commenting that it is not understood in opposition to a person's intellectual faculties, nor as merely representing the emotional life, but rather that 'it is the symbol of the integration of the whole interior life of a person. It is the centre – the *self*.'⁴⁴ In other words, the call of the Christian is to receive Christ's heart into their own, his self into their self, and to thus unite their heart to Christ's, and to carry his heart to their fellow man. This is a Eucharistic life, and is revealed in the devotion to, or the spirituality of, the Heart of Jesus.

In briefly considering the theological tradition of the Sacred Heart, we can see a correlation with Eucharistic devotion, in which Jesus himself makes clear the connection by revealing the message of his Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary during times of Eucharistic adoration.⁴⁵ Devotion to the Sacred Heart is entirely connected to devotion to the Eucharist, as the 'the Heart of Jesus is there, veiled, hidden ... but really present. It is there, not as a mere relic, but living.'⁴⁶ The impact upon St. Margaret Mary, after receiving these revelations of the living heart of Christ was to be drawn more and more powerfully to the Blessed Sacrament, and to adoration.⁴⁷

The heart of Christ and the heart of the Christian united in the Eucharist is a union of the whole self, and through the layperson's engagement with the temporal

⁴³ John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. English translation: The Redeemer of Man (4 March 1979), 8.

⁴⁴ Dennis J Murphy MSC, *The Heart of the Word Incarnate* (Bangalore, India: Asian Trading Corporation, 2003), 24.

⁴⁵ Margaret Mary Alacoque, *Life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque* (Walmer, Kent: Visitation Library, 1930), 67-70, 106.

⁴⁶ Louis S.J. Verheylezoon, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart* (London: Sands & Co, 1956), 149.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

order, a means by which Christ can be taken into the midst of the world. As it is the heart of Christ, his centre, which is truly needed by the world, it is thus true that it is his Eucharist that must (as Benedict XVI said⁴⁸) permeate culture, families, and individuals. In leaving his Body and Blood not only as food for the faithful but as a Presence in every tabernacle across the world, Christ did indeed not leave us orphans (Jn 14:18). This Presence was surely not meant to be ‘hidden’, however. Speaking of the inflammation of love within his heart, Jesus said to St. Margaret Mary, that it was ‘unable any longer to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning Charity, It must needs spread them abroad by thy means, and manifest Itself to them [mankind]...’⁴⁹

In no way intending to interpret the heart of Jesus as being simply synonymous for the Eucharist, it is nonetheless clear that the Sacrament was instituted out of the consuming love of Christ’s heart, as he told his disciples: ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.’ (Lk 22:15) And so, we can understand of the Sacred Heart that ‘not the least part of the revelation of that Heart is the Eucharist, which He gave to us out of the great charity of His own Heart.’⁵⁰ Reflecting on the implications of this, and of the need for Christ’s Eucharist to infuse the world with his presence and love, José Guadalupe Trevino comments on the passage in which Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus with the costly ointment of pure nard (Jn 12:1-8):

... [Jesus] must have contemplated, in the broken vase and its poured-out perfume, a touching symbol of His Eucharist. His heart was indeed a precious vessel, formed by the hands of God and overflowing with the richest perfume heaven has ever known: a sublime mixture of the majesty of divine love and the tenderness of human affection. Carrying this precious vase within His breast, He had lived among men. But on the eve of His death, He, the divine Model of total, perfect, and irrevocable self-surrender, poured forth in the Eucharist the fragrance of all the love contained in that vase, and the following day broke the vase itself on the cross. ‘And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.’ Yes, all

⁴⁸ Benedict XVI, *Ibid.*, 2012.

⁴⁹ Alacoque, *op. cit.*, 67.

⁵⁰ St. Albert the Great, "*De Eucharistia*," dist. VI, tr. 1., c. 1: *Opera Omnia*, ed. Borgnet, vol. XXXVIII, Paris, 1890, 358.

mankind, all the centuries, and the whole universe have been filled with the sweet odor of this divine perfume.⁵¹

To carry this ‘odor’ into the world, to be indeed infused with this divine perfume, is the vocation of the layperson. In calling for a Eucharistic spirituality of the faithful that embraces the whole of life, Benedict XVI emphasized that this experience of the centre of one’s self being united to the Real Presence of Christ, ‘is not just participation in Mass and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.’⁵² Indeed, just as it is not merely by meeting certain obligations that a Christian is united to Christ, there is no one means by which to live this call. In considering the tools available to the layperson, however, adoration presents itself as one that can enable the Christian to enter more richly into the Mass, grow in devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and then, even more deeply, be imbued with a Eucharistic spirit and purpose beyond the walls of the church. By placing the Blessed Sacrament at the centre of a community, parish, or diocese’s activity, its time and space are given over to the Eucharist, and its adorers carry that Eucharistic presence out into the world.

1.6 An overview and response to criticisms of adoration

To be that Eucharistic presence, adorers must be rooted in the teachings and spiritual tradition of the Church, which, as we have seen, place adoration in relationship to the Mass. Where the liturgical instructions for adoration have been ignored, misapplied, and in some cases even abused, an understandable concern has arisen as these actions may detract from the relationship of adoration to the

⁵¹ José Guadalupe Trevino, *The Holy Eucharist* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1947), 4.

⁵² SC, 77.

celebration of the Eucharist. Adoration is clearly at its most beneficial to the adorer, and thus to the Church, when its practice follows the liturgical norms.⁵³

Critics of adoration are often less concerned with the difficulty of enforcing liturgical norms for the devotion, however, than with historical and theological considerations. These arguments deserve a response, as genuine historical and theological errors in the devotion would have significant ramifications. The chief arguments of key critics are that adoration erodes the understanding of the Mass as a meal, is an individual rather than communal practice, can be linked to flawed theological ideas, is irrelevant in the modern Church, and places an emphasis on ‘looking’ over receiving. A brief review of these criticisms provides a helpful context for clarifying the nature of this devotion and emphasises the importance of a clear understanding of the relationship between adoration of the Sacrament and its celebration in the Mass.

Richard McBrien argues that adoration distorts the meaning of the Eucharist as a meal.⁵⁴ He is concerned that the growth in the practice of adoration reflected an atmosphere in the Church where ‘the sacrament was primarily to be worshipped rather than taken as spiritual nourishment.’⁵⁵ In other words, he believes that adoration ‘...erodes the fact that the Eucharist is a meal. Holy Communion is something to be eaten, not to be adored.’⁵⁶ In making this argument, McBrien raises two significant concerns; first, he implies that adoration and communion are mutually exclusive, and secondly, that adoration encourages an individualistic versus communal faith experience of the liturgy.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁴ Richard McBrien, *Catholicism* (Minnesota: Winston Press, 1980), 637.

⁵⁵ McBrien, *op. cit.*, 637.

⁵⁶ Francis X. Rocca, ‘Vatican tries to revive eucharistic adoration’, *Christian Century*, Vol.128:No.14 (2011), 19.

In the first, we can clearly see that communion and adoration are not mutually exclusive but in fact dependent upon one another. There are, indeed, significant moments of adoration within the Mass itself, at the consecration, the doxology, and during communion itself (at the priest's words 'Behold the Lamb of God ...', and in the moments that the Sacrament is extended to each person, with words 'The Body of Christ' and 'The Blood of Christ'). As we have already seen, 'Communion and contemplation belong together: a person cannot communicate with another person without knowing him.'⁵⁷

Any mutual exclusivity between communion and adoration, or the distortion of the Eucharistic meal through the act of worship, was not true for the Church Fathers, as we have seen previously through Augustine's commentary on the Psalms. Further, St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century instructs communicants to gaze with reverence upon the Sacrament they are receiving:

Make your left hand a throne for the right, as for that which is to receive a King. And having hallowed your palm, receive the Body of Christ, saying over it, *Amen*. So then after having carefully hallowed your eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake of it Then after you have partaken of the Body of Christ, draw near also to the Cup of His Blood; not stretching forth your hands, but bending, and saying with an air of worship and reverence, *Amen*, hallow yourself by partaking also of the Blood of Christ.⁵⁸

St. Cyril indicates that not only is one receiving the King through consuming of the Body and Blood of Christ, but one is also giving worship and adoration, and that indeed this is a blessing for the communicant whose eyes are 'carefully hallowed' upon beholding the Sacrament. Furthermore, as Roch A. Kereszty OCist notes,

⁵⁷ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 97.

⁵⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, XXIII, 21-22.

‘precisely because [Christ] has become as low and insignificant as ordinary food and drink for our sake, he deserves our worship in gratitude.’⁵⁹

While adoration in no way detracts from the Eucharist as food and drink, McBrien’s criticism perhaps reveals an over-emphasis on this aspect of the liturgy. For while the Mass is a shared meal, it is also the memorial of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection, the Lord’s Supper, the Breaking of Bread, the Eucharist (thanksgiving), the Holy Sacrifice, the Holy and Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion, and Holy Mass, and ‘each name evokes certain aspects’ of the Sacrament’s inexhaustible richness.⁶⁰

Returning to the second criticism of McBrien, that adoration encourages an individualistic versus communal faith experience of the liturgy, it is difficult to quantify the extent to which this may occur in practice. If it is true that adoration encourages the individual in their personal encounter and union with God, surely this is to be welcomed and supported. Whether this has a detrimental effect upon a sense of communality amongst the faithful is difficult to measure. The Mass itself holds a significant tension between the individual encounter between God and each worshipper, and the shared encounter of the Body of Christ. Indeed, as mentioned previously, these different dimensions to the Mass which are certainly not ‘in competition’ but in fact indispensable to each other.

Nathan D. Mitchell makes an argument in support of the individualistic versus communal criticism of adoration, suggesting that there is a lack of a correlation between the devotion and social justice, implying a detrimentally individualistic experience of sacramental communion.⁶¹ There are three key flaws in this criticism,

⁵⁹ Roch A. Kereszty OCist, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic Theology from a Historical, Biblical and Systematic Perspective* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 228.

⁶⁰ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edn. (Strathfield: Pauline Books, 1997), 1328-1332. (Hereafter CCC)

⁶¹ Nathan D. Mitchell, ‘The Amen Corner’, *Worship*, Vol.83:No.5, 458-9.

the first being that it presents no evidence to support the claim that those who adore fail to proactively engage in addressing social problems.⁶² Secondly, the Church teaches that a devotion to the Eucharist is in fact indispensable to the cause of social justice:

... In our life we must allocate a central place to loving our neighbour, that love which, in the light of the Crucified One, enables us to recognize the face of Jesus in the poor, in the weak and in the suffering. This is only possible if the true face of Jesus has become familiar to us through listening to his word, in an inner conversation with him, in entering this word so that we truly meet him, and of course, in the Mystery of the Eucharist.⁶³

In the third, it can be seen that in fact there are prominent examples in the Church of the link between adoration and compassion, in particular Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, as noted by Hitchcock.⁶⁴ While the Missionaries of Charity are certainly not alone in combining contemplation with action,⁶⁵ they are a prominent example of a Community that makes a direct connection between adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and love for the poor, described by Mother Teresa as ‘seeing and adoring the Presence of Jesus in the lowly appearance of Bread, and in the distressing disguise of the poor.’⁶⁶ As we have seen, such a connection is entirely theologically sound, and emphasises the charity that should be at the heart of Eucharistic worship.⁶⁷

Due to the growth of adoration at a time during which frequent reception of the Eucharist was uncommon, David N. Power suggests that there is a negative

⁶² James Hitchcock, ‘Why Eucharistic Adoration Disturbs Some Liturgists’, *Adoremus*, Vol.30, 7 (2009).

⁶³ Benedict XI, General Audience (16 January 2013).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 05/08/2014)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See also, for example, the Community of St. Jean, Missionaries of the Poor, Dorothy Day, and Catherine Doherty.

⁶⁶ Angelo Devananda, *Mother Teresa: Contemplative at the Heart of the World* (Great Britain: Fount Paperbacks, 1986), 94.

⁶⁷ See Tony Kelly, C.Ss.R., *The Bread of God: Nurturing a Eucharistic Imagination* (Australia: HarperCollinsReligious, 2001), 48-58.

relationship between these practices.⁶⁸ In other words, Power implies that adoration may make some of the faithful too scrupulous to receive Holy Communion, even though there are in a fitting state to do so. Power cannot provide extensive empirical evidence, and while it would be simplistic to suggest that because ‘holy men and women expressed their love for Christ more and more through ardent gaze upon the species,’⁶⁹ their piety became a deterrent to communicating, there is no doubt some substance to this argument, as history reveals a host of problems arising from poor catechesis and sacramental understanding.

Thus, while St. Thomas Aquinas argues that the stronger the faith, the more likely for the faithful to communicate,⁷⁰ this particular historical example gives weight to the importance of catechesis of the faithful in sacramental life and reminds us that there can be individual distortions in the understanding and practices of devotions. It would be wrong, however, to place the entire blame for this historical practice, of infrequent reception of Holy Communion, upon the devotion of adoration. Consider, for example, the past century in which we have seen a marked increase in the practice of frequent, even daily, reception of Holy Communion, and at the same time resurgence in the practice of adoration. While individual distortions around liturgical practices undoubtedly exist, the life of the Church takes place within history and many varied and complex factors are at work.

One criticism that is worth noting for the extent to which it reveals a pervading illogical aversion to adoration amongst some critics, and the extent to which these criticisms can have little theological weight, is an attempt to portray adoration as a heresy in the line of Jansenism. Writing about the theology of

⁶⁸ ‘Infrequent reception and intense desire to look upon the host went together.’ David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1992), 184.

⁶⁹ Power, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica III*, Q.80, Art.10.

Jansenism's early followers in relation to history of adoration in France, Mitchell argues that heresy stemmed from an unbalanced enthusiasm for adoration and reparation. He suggests that Jansenism is best described '...as one of several creative, post-Tridentine, early-modern renewal movements that sought a religious "awakening"', a revival of faith and piety,⁷¹ seeming to imply, by linking Jansenists to adoration, that adoration is equally dangerous. This is a flawed argument that appears to attempt to paint any increase in piety as being akin to Jansenism. In opposition to Jansenism, condemned by the Church as 'false, rash, scandalous, ... impious, blasphemous, contumelious, dishonoring to divine piety, and heretical,'⁷² adoration is offered as worship with a sound and firm foundation.⁷³

A final criticism is that adoration is simply out-dated. McBrien disputes that the worship of adoration is relevant in the modern Church, writing, 'now that most Catholics are literate and even well-educated, the Mass is in the language of the people, and its rituals are relatively easy to understand and follow, there is little or no need for extraneous eucharistic [sic] devotions. The Mass itself provides all that a Catholic needs sacramentally and spiritually.'⁷⁴ Kereszty refutes this, identifying the link between a decline in Eucharistic adoration and the understanding of the congregation of the doctrine of the Real Presence:

In spite of assiduous reminders by the magisterium, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament fell into neglect in many parishes; the tabernacle was often removed to such an inconspicuous place as to de-emphasize the importance of continuous adoration, a neglect which had consequences on the Eucharistic celebration itself ... The real presence of Christ was not so much denied as left unmentioned both in homilies and in religious instructions, with the result that a large number of younger Catholics do not believe in or rather have no firm knowledge

⁷¹ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 459.

⁷² Pope Innocent X, *Cum occasione* (31 May 1653), 5.

⁷³ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *op. cit.*, 164.

⁷⁴ Richard McBrien, "Perpetual eucharistic adoration", *National Catholic Reporter* (8 Sep 2009). <http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/perpetual-eucharistic-adoration> (accessed 14/06/2013)

of this presence.⁷⁵

Indeed, while the above criticisms of adoration have little foundation, a real concern is that the absence of adoration can detrimentally affect the Eucharistic faith of the Church. Most of these criticisms attempt to diminish the focus of the faithful on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, whereas adoration is directed towards the worship of his Presence and a hoped-for increase in reverence, devotion, and the desire for communion.

1.7 Conclusion

Having given an overview and brief historical study of adoration, this chapter has addressed the crucial relationship between adoration and the Mass, establishing that adoration is directed towards the Mass itself. The significance of this in the lives of the laity can be seen through the importance of participation in the liturgy, which adoration is in aid of, by building an active awareness of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The dynamism of this awareness can lead to a lay faithful that carry Christ's Eucharistic presence into the world, through hearts united to the heart of Christ. This union is borne through an active liturgical life, as we have seen above, and also, as will be addressed in chapter 2, a prayerful intimacy with God.

⁷⁵ Kereszty, *op. cit.*, 226.

Chapter 2: The role of adoration in the layperson's personal union with

Christ

The call to holiness, which is rooted in Baptism, is continually renewed in the Sacraments, 'principally in the Eucharist'⁷⁶, with the Eucharist providing the 'dynamic sustenance'⁷⁷ for the layperson's spiritual life. That is, the layperson's spiritual life, or prayer life, of which the Eucharist is central, is fundamental to their living an apostolic life. This chapter will give an overview of the significance of prayer in the lay vocation, and the ways in which adoration as a form of prayer can play an important role in leading the Christian into a more intimate union with Christ. We will consider the nature of this type of prayer, its means for building intimacy with Christ, the role of contemplation in the spiritual life and adoration's suitability for this type of prayer, the transformative power of Eucharistic adoration, and the practical reality of its availability in the laity's daily life.

2.1 The significance of prayer for the laity

A brief overview of magisterial teaching and spiritual writings, such as, famously, St. Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*, as well as the lives of early Christian martyrs, demonstrates that lay sanctity has been a powerful force within the Church since the time of Christ. It is also true, however, that with the Second Vatican Council there has arisen in our times a new and profound awareness of the call to holiness, regardless of one's state of life. Irrespective of social forces or trends, prayer is at the very heart of the layperson's response to live a supernatural life of grace in the midst of the temporal order:

⁷⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. English translation: The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (30 December 1998), 16. (Hereafter CL)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

[Despite the truly serious] present-day phenomenon of secularism ... Human longing and the need for religion are not able to be totally extinguished. When persons in conscience have the courage to face the more serious questions of human existence-particularly questions related to the purpose of life, to suffering and to dying-they are unable to avoid making their own the words of truth uttered by Saint Augustine: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you".⁷⁸

Prayer, as this response to the need for union with the Creator, is integral for the spiritual life of the layperson, and for their capacity to live the Christian life. Thus, the study of the mission of the laity must be rooted in the call of the Christian to a life in Christ through prayer, for it is from this union with the Lord that they 'derive the right and duty to the apostolate.'⁷⁹ In declaring Christ as 'the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church,'⁸⁰ the Second Vatican Council stated that the extent to which the layperson successively lives this apostolate is dependent upon their 'living union with Christ.'⁸¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* quotes the words of Christ: 'He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing' (Jn 15:15). In other words, a personal union with God through prayer is indispensable if the layperson wishes to fulfil their role within the body of Christ.

2.2 The prayer of Eucharistic adoration

A personal relationship between the layperson and Christ can be nurtured in many ways and Cardinal Ratzinger (before elected Pope) discusses the efficacious nature of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, highlighting the importance of the experience of Christ's Presence and gift of self in the Eucharist:

Adoration ... is always more than just talking with God in a general way. But against that could then rightly be voiced the objection: I can

⁷⁸ CL, 4.

⁷⁹ AA, 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid*.

just as well pray in the forest, in the freedom of nature. Certainly, anyone can. But if it were only a matter of that, then the initiative in prayer would lie entirely with us; then God would be a mental hypothesis – whether he can answer or wants to, would remain open. The Eucharist means, God has answered: The Eucharist is God as an answer, an answering presence.⁸²

To experience God as an answer, the answer to the deepest desires of the human heart, is to build a relationship with the Living Water that is Christ, which for the Christian takes place through prayer and the Sacraments. In this way, the believer is ‘drinking deeply from the source of life-giving water “welling up within us”’.⁸³ The imagery of water allows us to understand prayer in the Presence of Christ as being a way of ‘receiving’. Christ speaks to this question directly in the Gospel of John, declaring in two significant passages that the believer will receive life-giving water. In the first, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman by Jacob’s well, and insists upon a supernatural thirst that can only be met by the water that he will give, which will become in the one who ‘drinks’, that is, who prays, ‘a spring of water welling up to eternal life’ (Jn 4:14). Later, at the feast of Tabernacles, he proclaims, ‘If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water”’ (Jn 7:37-38), which again emphasises a spiritual nourishment for the one who believes and who comes to Christ, which is what the Christian does in prayer.

Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is particularly efficacious, due to the Sacrament itself. As John Paul II said, by praying before the Eucharist outside of Mass, ‘we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace.’⁸⁴ From this wellspring, the living water flows to nurture the spiritual life of the believer. In

⁸² Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 90.

⁸³ John Paul II, Homily (7 October 1989).

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 08/02/2013)

⁸⁴ EE, 25.

encouraging adoration to priests, Archbishop Alberto Carinci, makes a comment on the supernatural reality of such prayer, which is true regardless of the state of life of the adorer:

When we have succeeded in obtaining this minimum of an hour spent before the Most Blessed Sacrament, the rest will follow of itself. Exposed to the rays of the Divine Sun, souls will gradually become transformed and will acquire the taste for mental prayer, reserving their vocal prayer for another time. We can see from experience that this becomes true, if not for all, at least for the greater number.⁸⁵

While the different types of prayer during adoration, as prescribed by the Congregation for the Divine Worship, are all efficacious and to be strongly encouraged, there is perhaps a need to dwell a moment on times of silent prayer made before the Blessed Sacrament, and Archbishop Carinci's comment on exposure 'to the rays of the Divine Sun.' It might seem 'obvious' that during times of vocal or communal prayer in adoration some grace is being put into effect, or a particular mystery is meditated upon. For example, in the reading of the psalms we can see a congregation contemplating the Truth of God, in the singing of hymns an act of worship is being made to the Eucharist, and in meditating upon the rosary the Christian can reflect at length on the life of Christ.

All of these prayers should have contemplation as their aim, as we will discuss later, but the question of simply being in the presence of Christ is a crucial one. While the pilgrimage that is made by the Christian to the tabernacle can seem unimportant, or perhaps during their silent presence before the Sacrament it can seem that little is 'happening', we must consider the supernatural grace of the Real Presence, for 'who can measure the marvels of grace wrought in human hearts?'⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Archbishop Carinci, letter dated from Rome, October 11, 1956, quoted in *Handbook of the Daily Holy Hour*, Sacerdotal Union of Daily Adoration (USA: 1960), 27.

⁸⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. English translation: At the Beginning of the New Millennium (6 January 2001), 8. (Hereafter NMI)

Indeed, the fruitfulness of prayer in adoration, as much through the simplicity of silently seeking Christ's presence, as through vocal and communal prayers, has led to many societies of Eucharistic adoration amongst religious, but also notably amongst the laity.⁸⁷ The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle has been, in the words of John Paul II, 'a kind of magnetic pole attracting ... souls enamoured of him, ready to wait patiently to hear his voice, and ... to sense the beating of his heart.'⁸⁸ As the Holy Spirit always initiates the encounter with God, the adorer is drawn by grace into the very presence of Christ, an encounter which grows one's faith and love for God:

Only the experience of silence and prayer offers the proper setting for the growth and development of a true, faithful and consistent knowledge of that mystery which finds its culminating expression in the solemn proclamation by the Evangelist Saint John: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father' (1:14).⁸⁹

Christians are called to respond to the Holy Spirit and, in doing so, be 'distinguished above all in the art of prayer.'⁹⁰ With this as the case, then, as John Paul II writes, 'how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament?'⁹¹ Indeed, the love of God made present through Christ's Eucharistic flesh is an inestimable source for contemplation, and for the stirring of faith. The capacity to be 'face to face', or 'heart to heart', with the Lord is significant for the personal prayer life of the adorer.

⁸⁷ For example: Jesus Caritas Fraternity, the Lay Institute of Divine Mercy, Lay Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament, and Nocturnal Adoration Societies (significant in the foundation of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation by Eymard). The first Eucharistic congress, in Lille, France in 1881, was largely the work of a laywoman, Marie-Marthe Tamisier, and these international congresses continue to be attended today by the laity.

⁸⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*. English translation: Stay With Us, Lord (7 October 2004), 18.

⁸⁹ NMI, 20.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹¹ EE, 25.

As a result, the spiritual merits of adoration have been extolled repeatedly by recent Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, particularly in addressing gatherings of laypeople and youth. A striking example of this are the various gatherings, most notably the World Youth Day events, at which the popes exhort young people to participate in adoration, before leading crowds of several million in a time of adoration before the exposed Sacrament. At one such event, in Bologna, Italy in 1997, John Paul II, addressed the young people in a particularly pastoral way, saying, ‘Our eyes and hearts will be fixed on the Eucharist. Let Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is he who is the true answer of life that you seek. He stays here with us: he is God with us.’⁹²

2.3 Adoration as a means of building intimacy with Christ

In seeking to instill in the youth of the Church the practice of adoration, Church leaders appear to be seeking to catechise the faithful in prayer, significantly those who are the ‘future’ of the faith, so that the lived experience of Catholicism may be one of a tangible relationship with the Lord that transforms the whole of one’s life. Our God, we are told through the magisterial emphasis on praying in his Eucharistic presence, has entered into our time and space, is truly approachable, and can be the compass that guides every detail of our lives. Indeed, the Church tells the faithful, ‘only by deepening our Eucharistic communion with the Lord through personal prayer can we discover what he asks of us in daily life.’⁹³

Thus, as much as we can see that there is a natural progression from belief in the Real Presence to worship of the Blessed Sacrament, we can see that there is also a

⁹² John Paul II, Speech to Young People (27 September 1997).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 04/02/2013)

⁹³ John Paul II, Homily (7 October 1989).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 18/02/2013)

natural progression in regards to prayer. If one wishes to be close to Christ and to pray to him, prayer before his Real Presence is highly desirable, as in adoration ‘we no longer stand before an imagined God but before the God who has truly given himself to us.’⁹⁴ Indeed, in this way, the incarnate gift of Christ is made powerfully present through the gift of his body and blood in the Blessed Sacrament. This relationship with the Incarnate Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament has implications, as we have seen, for the experience of his presence, but also for the prayer of the adorer, as St. Peter Julian Eymard (d. 1868) comments upon:

Through this sacramental presence we go to our Lord directly and come to Him as during His mortal life. How unfortunate it would be if, in order to honor the humanity of Jesus Christ, our memory had to travel back nineteen centuries. That would satisfy the mind, but could we render an exterior homage to a past that is so far away? We would content ourselves with giving thanks without participating in the mysteries. But now we may come and adore like the shepherds and prostrate ourselves like the Magi. We no longer have to deplore our not having been at Bethlehem or on Calvary. In fact to adore well we must keep in mind that Jesus, present in the Eucharist, glorifies and continues therein all the mysteries and virtues of His mortal life; that the Holy Eucharist is Jesus Christ past, present, and future; that the Eucharist is the last development of the Incarnation and mortal life of the Savior; that Jesus Christ gives us therein all the graces; that all truths tend to the Eucharist; and that the final word on everything is the *Eucharist*, since It is Jesus Christ.⁹⁵

Eymard suggests that knowledge of Christ *in and through* the Eucharist is a means to know the Lord in a particular, and penetrating, way. Christ does not so much ‘come alive’ in Eucharistic adoration, but truly is alive, and the mysteries of his life are present to the adorer through the supernatural reality of transubstantiation and the grace of contemplation. The significance of contemplation in a Eucharistic life is that of encountering and knowing Christ as ‘a real person, whose becoming part of

⁹⁴ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 91.

⁹⁵ Peter Julian Eymard, *In the Light of the Monstrance* (New York: Sentinel Press, 1947), 179–180.

human history is capable of renewing the life of every man and woman,⁹⁶ and of entering into the renewing events of his earthly life through his presence in the Sacrament. Indeed, the extent to which a Christian may be renewed through the Eucharist may be impacted upon by his contemplation of the mystery and of the person of Christ dwelling therein:

Communion and contemplation belong together: a person cannot communicate with another person without knowing him. He must be open for him, see him, and hear him. Love or friendship always carries within it an impulse of reverence, or adoration. Communicating with Christ therefore demands that we gaze on him, allow him to gaze on us, listen to him, get to know him. Adoration is simply the personal aspect of Communion. We cannot communicate sacramentally without doing it personally. Sacramental Communion becomes empty, and finally a judgment for us, unless it is repeatedly completed by us personally.⁹⁷

Ratzinger's assertion uses strong language in suggesting that Sacramental Communion could be a judgment if not joined, or 'repeated', by personal communion through a contemplative gaze or reflection. In examining the effect of the receiving of the Eucharist upon preservation from future sins, Aquinas noted that, 'The effect of this sacrament is received according to man's condition.'⁹⁸ We can apply this logic in support of Ratzinger's argument, as the interior disposition to know and love Christ, that can perhaps be absent without sufficient prayer and contemplation, is central to the 'condition' of the man receiving the sacrament. We can conclude that it seems logical that contemplation would be necessary for knowing, and thus for relationship, and thus for communion. After all, 'Jesus Christ is not just a private conviction or an abstract idea,'⁹⁹ but rather a man who can be known, and at the same time, a man whom the knowledge of can never be exhausted. This abundance or wealth of

⁹⁶ SC, 77.

⁹⁷ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 97.

⁹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica III*, Q.79, Art.6.

⁹⁹ SC, 77.

contemplation, coupled with its efficacy for communion, indicates the important role it should play in leading the Christian to a deeper union with Christ.¹⁰⁰

2.4 The call to contemplation for all Christians

The lay vocation is no barrier to contemplation.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the magisterium teaches that while consecrated men and women are made, by nature of their state of life, ‘more open to the experience of contemplation, ... it would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life.’¹⁰² Thus, for the lay Christian, the question is not if to contemplate, but how. Amongst the spiritual traditions of the Church, the magisterium repeatedly proposes adoration as a means for contemplation, as Christ is fully present in the Eucharist. Reflecting upon the life of Jesus through the scriptures and the rosary are an ever-potent source of contemplation, made particularly so in adoration by coupling them with the source Himself.

To contemplate or to look upon the source of all holiness was demonstrably the source *of* holiness in the Old Testament. Moses, in conversing with God, was radiant as a result (Ex 34:29), and the people of God would look upon the cloud of his

¹⁰⁰ Dom Mark Daniel Kirby OSB expounds upon the need for personal communion and offers an insightful interpretation of how adoration can prevent an ‘empty’ communion: ‘Adoration is a discernment of one’s own heart as well as the discernment of the Body of Christ. In the presence of the “Eucharistic Face of Christ”, the adorer realizes the import of the psalmist’s words: “You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance” (Ps 89:8) ... In discerning both his own sinful heart *and* the spotless Flesh of the Lamb immolated for the salvation of the world, the adorer is spared the “judgment and condemnation” of those who “eat and drink” (1 Cor 11:29) without examining themselves and without recognizing the Body of the Lord.’ Dom Mark Daniel Kirby OSB, ‘A Mystagogical Catechesis of Eucharistic Adoration’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 37-38.

¹⁰¹ This section takes for its understanding of contemplative prayer a prayer of gazing, looking upon, and pondering God, as defined at one point in the Catechism as ‘...a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love’ (CCC, 2724). While there is a rich and vast theological tradition in the area of contemplation, the scope of this thesis does not provide for an extensive overview, but rather a brief discussion of the theological implications of contemplation as regards adoration. This brief discussion is also significant in its bearing on our study in chapter 5 of Mary as a model of adoration.

¹⁰² NMI, 34

presence to guide their way (Ex 40:38). Following the disobedience of the Israelites, God showed his mercy by saving those who would look upon his chosen instrument, a bronze serpent (Num 21:4-9). Jesus refers to this bronze serpent in his meeting with Nicodemus, saying, ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life’ (Jn 3:14-15). Thus the Israelites in the desert demonstrated their belief in God’s saving power by looking upon the serpent, and both St. Matthew and St. Mark record that the centurion and those with him, who looked upon, or, as in St. Mark’s account, stood facing, the crucified Christ, responded with the declaration of faith: ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’ (Mt 27:53, Mk 15:39). It is only by looking upon the crucified flesh of Christ that the Church can proclaim with St. Thomas, ‘My Lord and my God!’ (Jn 20:28).

Commenting on this importance of gazing at the crucified One, Ratzinger writes:

Saint John’s account of the Lord’s death closes with the words: ‘They shall look on him whom they have pierced’ (Jn 19:37 = Zech 12:10). He begins His Revelation with these words, which in that place constitute the opening of the Day of Judgment, that day on which the one who was pierced will rise over the world as its judgment and its life. But he commands us to look upon him now, so that the judgment may be turned to salvation. ‘They shall look on him who they have pierced.’ This might be a description of the inner direction of our Christian life, our learning ever more truly to look upon him, to keep the eyes of our heart turned upon him, to see him, and thereby to grow more humble; to recognise our sins, to recognise how we have struck him, how we have wounded our brethren and thereby wounded him; to look upon him and, at the same time, to take hope, because he whom we have wounded is he who loves us; to look upon him and to receive the way of life.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 55.

2.5 Transformation and conversion through adoration

To experience the love of Christ on the Cross through the adoration of his flesh, which Ratzinger suggests can practically grow the Christian in humility, repentance, and hope, is to ultimately increase the layperson in their love for God, which is to fulfill the first and greatest commandment (Mt 22:37-38). Contemplation of the Eucharist is thus at the service of love of God, which itself requires a dynamic relationship with the Trinity:

The Eucharist reveals the loving plan that guides all of salvation history (cf. Eph 1:10; 3:8- 11). There the Deus Trinitas, who is essentially love (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8), becomes fully a part of our human condition. In the bread and wine under whose appearances Christ gives himself to us in the paschal meal (cf. Lk 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26), God's whole life encounters us and is sacramentally shared with us.¹⁰⁴

This encounter must have an impact upon the relationship between the Christian and God, on building, as we have seen, a personal relationship formed through Christ's presence, but also in contributing to the transformation of the believer. Prayer is a dialogue in which the one who prays should be changed, through an interior conversion of heart and a sanctification of life. If we consider that the adorer encounters God himself, in the Eucharist, then we can examine adoration as a means for the transformation of the Christian into the one they adore.

It is apparent that 'in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings.'¹⁰⁵ The question of whether the Eucharist has a power to transform beyond the physical reception of the sacrament was addressed by Aquinas, who examined the effect of the sacrament through spiritual communion and declared that, 'One can be changed into Christ, and

¹⁰⁴ SC, 8.

¹⁰⁵ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*. English translation: On Catechesis in Our Time (16 October 1979), 23. (Hereafter CT)

be incorporated in Him by mental desire, even without receiving this sacrament.¹⁰⁶

Benedict XVI elaborates upon this, emphasizing the importance of fidelity to the Eucharistic encounter at Sunday Mass, but also telling his audience, which was a general audience that would have contained a significant number of laypeople, that ‘it is precisely through our gazing in adoration that the Lord draws us towards him into his mystery in order to transform us as he transforms the bread and the wine.’¹⁰⁷

The argument that prayer, rather than simply communion, is necessary for transformation, was also made by Eymard, when he said that ‘If you do not pray, receiving our Lord will be like taking a remedy enclosed in something which prevents it from producing its salutary effects.’¹⁰⁸ That the Eucharist has salutary effects upon the adorer emphasises again a dynamism, that the Blessed Sacrament, when exposed upon the altar or when adored while reposed in the tabernacle, is not passive, but assiduously at work. Ratzinger draws upon the comparison of St. Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians, when the Apostle compares Holy Communion to the nuptial union of husband and wife, that in both acts ‘The two shall become one’ (Gen 2:24), and comments, ‘When we hear this, we at once have some notion of how the presence of Jesus Christ [in the Eucharist] is to be understood. It is not something at rest but is a power that catches us and works to draw us within itself.’¹⁰⁹

To be drawn within this power, indeed to be drawn into Christ, implies both a physical closeness and a spiritual oneness. We see in the Gospels that physical proximity to Christ leads to conversion and transformation. For example, there is the woman with the flow of blood who reaches out to touch the fringe of Jesus’ garment,

¹⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica III*, Q.73, Art.3.

¹⁰⁷ Benedict XVI, General Audience (17 November 2010).

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 01/02/2013)

¹⁰⁸ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 113.

¹⁰⁹ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 77.

in belief that this will heal her (Lk 8:43-48), the healing of the deaf and dumb man which occurs as Jesus puts his fingers in his ears and on his tongue (Mk 7:31-37), and the profession of faith proclaimed by Thomas upon placing his hands in the open side of Christ (Jn 20:26-29). Just as the person of Christ brought those he encountered into a more whole life, a life transformed by his healing touch and his divine love, there is nothing we lack that cannot be fulfilled through the gift of himself in the Eucharist. Christ himself described his flesh as the bread of life (Jn 6:48), and later declared that he had come that we may have life and have it to the full (Jn 10:10).

Thus, through the adoration of his Body, which is given for the life of the world (Jn 6:51), we can more and more receive the fullness of life:

There is nothing authentically human – our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds – that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full. Here we can see the full human import of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist: the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and individual, but tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God.¹¹⁰

To worship in this way recalls the words of St. Paul, who said, ‘We, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is the work of the Lord who is Spirit’ (2 Cor 3:18). This transformation, through the Spirit, into the image of Christ, is to reflect him whose offering of self to the Father was completed upon the Cross, but was first lived out through a daily union with God. Jesus, in his ministry, revealed God’s love: forgiving sins, healing the sick, casting out demons, and feeding the hungry.

¹¹⁰ SC, 71.

We can thus see that his union with God was lived not only when he was at prayer, but that it indeed permeated every aspect of his existence. This is instructive, for Christians are called to become sharers in Christ's divine nature (1 Pet 1:4), to become like another Christ, so that, in the words of St. Paul, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20). A transformation into Christ equates to living in the love of Jesus for the Father, a love that is made wholly tangible in the gift of the Eucharist:

Eucharistic worship is therefore precisely the expression of that love which is the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation ... A living fruit of this worship is the perfecting of the image of God that we bear within us, an image that corresponds to the one that Christ has revealed in us. As we thus become adorers of the Father 'in spirit and truth,' we mature in an ever fuller union with Christ, we are ever more united to Him, and – if one may use the expression – we are ever more in harmony with Him.¹¹¹

As we have seen, supernatural grace operating in the Blessed Sacrament has an effect outside of Holy Communion, which can draw the adorer into a deeper personal relationship with Christ, but also can work to transform that Christian more and more into his image. In the life of the Church, saints reveal the capacity to be united to Christ in lives and deaths like his. A modern example is St. Maximilian Kolbe, who exemplified the words of the Evangelist, 'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (Jn 15:13), in his death as a martyr of charity in Auschwitz on 14th August, 1941. Throughout his religious life, beginning in his years of formation in Rome, 'love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was deeply rooted in his heart. He enrolled himself in perpetual adoration ... [and] visited

¹¹¹ John Paul II, Letter *Dominicae Ceneae* (24 February 1980), 5. (Hereafter DC)

the Blessed Sacrament every hour. At night he would remain there, almost always the last one.¹¹²

The argument can be made that the graces of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament would have aided in the perfection of Christian charity in St. Maximilian Kolbe. The Eucharist is, after all, not simply a reenactment of the Last Supper, but a living and radical form of worship, which allows us to enter into Christ's ultimate gift of self, and to be transformed by this gift:

The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within creation the principle of a radical change, a sort of "nuclear fission," to use an image familiar to us today, which penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).¹¹³

This implies an ontological change in nature, which fell when man fell, to be redeemed through the salvation offered by Christ and the cooperation of the saints. This is ultimately the purpose of all prayer, and of every action of the Christian, but it has no impetus without the 'nuclear fission' that is the liturgy. The true transformation of the world takes place only through liturgy, for 'creation was fashioned with a view to the Sabbath and therefore for the worship and adoration of God. Worship is inscribed in the order of creation.'¹¹⁴ In this way we can see the crucial role of liturgy, and its being lived authentically and deeply, in the lives of the laity, for it forms the first and most crucial aspect of their apostolate, chiefly to contribute to the transformation of the world through their own union with Christ.

¹¹² Antonio Ricciardi O.F.M. Conv, *St. Maximilian Kolbe: Apostle of Our Difficult Age* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982), 38-39.

¹¹³ SC, 11.

¹¹⁴ CCC, 347.

2.6 The practicality of adoration in the lives of the laity

To build up the Body of Christ in the practice of prayer, and particularly of adoration, there needs to be an examination not only of its spiritual implications but the practicality of its availability and accessibility. This obviously concerns questions about the extent to which cathedrals, parishes and chapels encourage the practice by remaining open throughout the day, or even hold dedicated times of exposition. Where adoration is available, however, there is also the practical question of how accessible adoration might be to the lay Christian. That is, can it be practically applied to the spiritual life of a person in the world, and, specifically, how does one learn to adore? This is an important aspect to any study of adoration, as prayer requires catechesis. The spiritual practices of the Christian life ‘cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn how to pray: learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: “Lord, teach us to pray!” (Lk 11:1).’¹¹⁵

To address the first question we can refer to René Voillaume, writing in the spiritual tradition of Blessed Charles de Foucauld, who argues that adoration is a realistic spiritual practice for any believer:

Why should the action of the sacrament be confined within the Mass, during which we sometimes do not have leisure and peace enough to open our hearts in faith and love and longing for our God? Meditation on such a great mystery needs silence and a long time spent in prayer. And should not this union with Christ which is the purpose of the sacrament in the liturgy be developed and deepened in a free and loving way in our own lives? Shouldn’t each one of us have a personal life of contemplation and love for Christ?¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ NMI, 32.

¹¹⁶ René Voillaume, *Source of Life: The Eucharist and Christian Living* (Paris: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1975), 53.

Voillaume argues that certain graces of the spiritual life can only be received in silence, for while man is a social creature, there is an aspect to him that is essentially private, and without this privacy real friendship and love cannot be truly fostered.¹¹⁷ This is certainly true of human relationships, and suggests that, practically, if the layperson is able to find times of quiet conversation to develop and build their key intrapersonal relationships, then it must follow that they can do the same with the Lord. This poses the question of the role of personal prayer in the life of the Christian, for while there are times when parishes and even dioceses and the whole Church gather in adoration (for example, the Feast of Corpus Christi), there is also a need for the Christian to spend time in meditation, intercession and silence with the Lord, which can have, as we have seen, benefits if done in adoration.

The example of lay movements of adoration within the Church over the centuries gives support to the demonstration of adoration's spiritual accessibility for the faithful.¹¹⁸ That at different times in history societies of laypeople instituted and coordinated adoration and even perpetual exposition in places is an example of the realistic application of this devotion in the spiritual lives of the lay faithful. Examples of lay holiness, such as Pier Giorgio Frassati,¹¹⁹ who themselves benefitted from this devotion further give weight to the argument of promoting adoration amongst the laity.

The second practical question is one of catechesis. The magisterium teaches, and experience confirms, that the practice of the faith, as much as the faith itself, must

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 54.

¹¹⁸ See examples on page 26.

¹¹⁹ 'The secret of his apostolic zeal and holiness is to be sought in the ascetical and spiritual journey which he traveled; in prayer, in persevering adoration, even at night, of the Blessed Sacrament ...' John Paul II, Homily on the Beatification of Pier Giorgio Frassati (20 May 1990), 3. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 02/08/2013)

be learned.¹²⁰ This undoubtedly has repercussions for the practice of adoration, as the faithful should be formed in an understanding and right practice of the devotion. This should surely be a priority, and the discussion in this chapter around the prayer of adoration, and the variety of sources drawn upon, demonstrates a wealth of material available for the task of ‘teaching’ adoration to the laity. At the same time, it should be considered that one of the attractive dimensions of adoration over the course of nearly 1,000 years might be its simplicity. An understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and an openness to a living relationship with God could be said to be the catechetical ‘tools’ needed for adoration.¹²¹

Furthermore, we should consider that catechesis is not simply the teaching of the faith but the name ‘given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples.’¹²² When we examine how best to catechise the laity in the practice of adoration we can consider that, as John Paul II remarks, ‘this teaching (catechesis) is not a body of abstract truths. It is the communication of the living mystery of God.’¹²³ To communicate this mystery, John Paul II goes on to insist, the teaching of Christ cannot be separated from ‘His life and His very being ... the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching.’¹²⁴

¹²⁰ ‘Catechesis is therefore for adults of every age, including the elderly-persons who deserve particular attention in view of their experience and their problems - no less than for children, adolescents and the young ... It must be restated that nobody in the Church of Jesus Christ should feel excused from receiving catechesis.’ CT, 45.

¹²¹ A famous example of the devotion’s simplicity is cited in the life of St. Jean Vianney, who had a parishioner who, when asked what he was doing during his time of adoration, replied, ‘I look at the good God, and He looks at me’. Abbe Francois Trochu, *The Cure d’Ars: St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney* (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 1977), 197

René Voillaume, *Source of Life: The Eucharist and Christian Living* (Paris: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1975), 53.

¹²² John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesis Tradendae*. English translation: On Catechesis in our Time (16 October 1979), 1. (Hereafter CT)

¹²³ Ibid, 7.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 9.

This has significant bearing on catechetical methods, as catechesis is not merely academic or intellectual but concerns the whole of the person and the integration of their knowledge and relationship with God. As such, John Paul II teaches that there are elements in popular piety that, ‘if they were properly used, could serve very well to help people advance towards knowledge of the mystery of Christ and of His message.’¹²⁵

With this in mind, we can consider the way in which adoration itself can act, in a most practical way, as a means of catechesis, for Christ is the greatest of teachers, and the ‘whole of Christ’s life was a continual teaching.’¹²⁶ In a way, this addresses the issue of how to adore, for Christ, in the Eucharist, is the teacher, and our adoration should be truly Christocentric. In this way, adoration can be a practical means to catechise the faithful in the spiritual life. Eymard, for example, was dedicated to teaching the practice of adoration and demonstrates in his writings both how to adore and how Christ teaches through adoration:

You wish to practice humility, for instance. See how our Lord practices it in the Blessed Sacrament. Start with this knowledge, this light of the Eucharist and go to the crib if you wish, or to Calvary. Your going thither will be easier, because it is of the nature of our mind to proceed from the known to the unknown. In the Blessed Sacrament you have our Lord’s humility right before your eyes.¹²⁷

Christ himself teaches through adoration because he is truly present in the adored Sacrament. Because catechesis is also the act of the Church transmitting the Gospel to her children, adoration can play a role through the witness of public worship and the teaching this gives as regards the faith and the Sacraments.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 54.

¹²⁶ CT, 9. See also: ‘The best catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself, celebrated well.’ SC. 64.

¹²⁷ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 41.

Consider, for example, the example of over two million young people praying in silent adoration with Pope Benedict XVI at the 2011 World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain. At this particular event, a storm had swept over the gathering and yet the young people remained, in anticipation of the time of prayer in adoration that would take place. At the conclusion of exposition, Pope Benedict XVI spontaneously addressed the crowd, thanking them for their endurance:

We have lived together an adventure. Strengthened by your faith in Christ, you have resisted the rain. Before leaving I wish you all good night. Have a good rest. I thank you for the sacrifice that you are making and I have no doubt that you will offer it generously to the Lord. We shall see one another tomorrow, God willing, in the celebration of the Eucharist. I am expecting all of you. I thank you for the fine example that you have given. As happened tonight, you can always, with Christ, endure the trials of life. Do not forget this. I thank you all.¹²⁸

These words exemplify the way public worship can be a means of transmitting the faith, that is, of catechesis. Because ‘catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways,’¹²⁹ the act of public worship is a significant and visible sign of what the Church believes. By kneeling in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, turning to the Eucharist in petition, and, indeed, enduring physical discomfort and even hardship in order to adore, the Church transmits the faith that she has received; that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, and that he is our source of life.

2.7 Conclusion

¹²⁸ Benedict XVI, Prayer Vigil with Young People during Madrid World Youth Day (20 August 2011). http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 05/08/2014)

¹²⁹ Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Washington DC: USCCB, 1997), 105.

Prayer is central to the apostolate of the laity, as their call to holiness is renewed through a living union with Christ. While adoration is not the only source of building or fostering this union, it is unique outside of the celebration of the Mass for being the worship of Christ in his Real Presence, and, as we have seen in this chapter's overview of adoration as a form of prayer, has a particular efficacy. Through adoration, the presence of Christ both teaches and transforms the adorer, prolongs the liturgical action of the Mass in a way that allows the layperson to 'both prepare for the liturgy and profit from it,'¹³⁰ and leads the layperson into contemplation. From the union, or relationship, that comes through prayer, the layperson derives their call to an apostolic life of evangelisation, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

¹³⁰ Voillaume, *op. cit.*, 56.

Chapter 3 Evangelisation and adoration

All Christians, regardless of their state of life, share in the Church's apostolate of evangelisation, which stems from their primary call to a life lived in union with Christ. Recent magisterial teaching has emphasized the apostolate of the laity, that is, their sharing in this call of evangelisation, with its particular emphasis on the temporal setting, and, at the same time, the Church has increasingly encouraged the faithful to a Eucharist-centred mission. With these two aspects of magisterial teaching as context, this chapter will seek to understand the Church's teaching on the laity's call to mission particularly within the context of a Eucharistic faith, one that can be specifically served through adoration. In exploring the relationship of adoration and evangelisation, we will examine the correlation between the Eucharist and mission, the necessity of prayer and contemplation for evangelisation, and the effects of adoration in the practice of evangelisation.

3.1 The laity and the mission

Ten years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and asked whether the Church was 'more ardent in contemplation and adoration and more zealous in missionary, charitable and liberating action?'¹³¹ Paul VI implies that for the Church to grow in her interior life of love with God she must also increase in zeal for evangelisation. He makes this connection clear later in the same paragraph, when, after mentioning the hierarchy of the Church, religious, and the laity, he directs these words 'to all of them,' declaring that 'our evangelizing zeal must spring from true holiness of life, and, as the Second Vatican

¹³¹ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. English translation: *Evangelization in the Modern World* (8 December 1975), 76. (Hereafter EN)

Council suggests, preaching must in its turn make the preacher grow in holiness, which is nourished by prayer and above all by love for the Eucharist.¹³²

Not only is evangelisation the duty of the laity, as much as the ordained or religious, but the same call to holiness abounds as the source of their call to the apostolate. Indeed, the role of the laity is central to the Church's mission, for without the laity and their particular call to live the Gospel through family life, relationships, workplaces and neighbourhoods, the Church could not as fully be 'firmly established in the midst of the world and yet free and independent enough to call for the world's attention ... [testifying] to solidarity with people and at the same time to the Divine Absolute.'¹³³ Referring to the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, we receive the outline for lay evangelisation, which bears quoting at length:

Their main duty, whether they are men or women, is the witness which they are bound to bear to Christ by their life and works in the home, in their social milieu, and in their own professional circle. In them, there must appear the new man created according to God in justice and true holiness (cf. Eph. 4:24). But they must give expression to this newness of life in the social and cultural framework of their own homeland, according to their own national traditions. They must be acquainted with this culture; they must heal it and preserve it; they must develop it in accordance with modern conditions, and finally perfect it in Christ, so that the Faith of Christ and the life of the Church are no longer foreign to the society in which they live, but begin to permeate and to transform it. Let them be one with their fellow countrymen in sincere charity, so that there appears in their way of life a new bond of unity and of universal solidarity, which is drawn from the mystery of Christ. Let them also spread the Faith of Christ among those with whom they live or have professional connections - an obligation which is all the more urgent, because very many men can hear of Christ and of the Gospel only by means of the laity who are their neighbors. In fact, wherever possible, the laity should be prepared, in more immediate cooperation with the hierarchy, to fulfill a special mission of

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

proclaiming the Gospel and communicating Christian teachings, so that they may add vigor to the nascent Church.¹³⁴

This incredible task of evangelisation incorporates the presence of the laity in their societies, their being an instrument of spiritual transformation, and the call to proclaim and communicate the Gospel. It is a way of evangelisation that, like all others, is a ‘complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative.’¹³⁵ A definition like this can make evangelisation appear an impossible task for the lay person, or indeed for any person, but we must recall that Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit will be the ‘principle agent of evangelisation’:¹³⁶ ‘You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). Thus, it is the laity’s union to the Holy Spirit, their life in God, that is the source of both their call to evangelisation and their strength for the mission.

3.2 Evangelisation is directed towards the Eucharist

Christ draws all men to himself, so that they may have eternal life, for the glory of the Father. Thus, evangelisation is directed towards eternal life through belief in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in people’s hearts.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus speaks about the promise of eternal life. For the purposes of this topic we will look at the explicit connection Jesus makes in John’s Gospel between the Eucharist and eternal life, when he tells the crowds, ‘I am the

¹³⁴ Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* (7 December 1965), 21. (Hereafter AG)

¹³⁵ EN, 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 75

living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh' (Jn 6:51). It is through the eternal life promised in the Eucharist, made possible because the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice,¹³⁷ and 'the other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.'¹³⁸ This is why we can say that the totality of evangelisation 'consists in the implantation of the Church, which does not exist without the driving force which is the sacramental life culminating in the Eucharist.'¹³⁹

Thus, the mission of the Church must always be directed towards Christ in the Eucharist, where 'the truth of Jesus [is] perfectly understood, [for] the disciples of Emmaus knew the Savior in the breaking of the Bread.'¹⁴⁰ Consequently, the Church teaches that 'the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.'¹⁴¹

In other words, the faithful are called to evangelise because the world needs to know Christ, and to know him in the Eucharist.¹⁴² Christ declared that the fullness of life was found in his Eucharist, telling the crowds, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you' (Jn 6:53). He also used the

¹³⁷ CCC, 1367.

¹³⁸ Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis* (7 December 1965), 5. (Hereafter PO)

¹³⁹ EN, 28.

¹⁴⁰ Eymard, *op cit.*, p.118

¹⁴¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *op. cit.*, 10.

¹⁴² 'How great is humanity's need today to rediscover the source of its hope in the Sacrament of the Eucharist! I thank the Lord because many parishes, as well as celebrating Holy Mass devoutly, are educating the faithful in Eucharistic Adoration, and I hope also in view of the upcoming International Eucharistic Congress that this practice will continue to spread.' Benedict XVI, address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Committee for the International Eucharistic Congress (9 November 2006). http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 05/03/2013)

imagery of a Great Banquet, calling his followers to invite strangers in to share the Lord's feast (Lk 14:23). The Eucharist is the banquet on earth that prefigures the heavenly banquet, and by leading people to the Eucharist, the Church leads people to the fullest sacramental experience of Christ and the foreshadowing of their eternal life.

Thus, evangelisation is directed towards Christ in the Eucharist, to a relationship that is abundant, plentiful, and directed towards the Eternal Kingdom. Because of this, John Paul II could say that 'Eucharistic worship constitutes the soul of all Christian life. In fact, Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, that is to say, in the love of God and neighbor, and this love finds its source in the Blessed Sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love.'¹⁴³ In essence, this 'sacrament of love', experienced at the Eucharistic table, is the feast, or the great banquet, which each person is called to.

3.3 The Eucharist makes us missionary

While evangelisation is directed towards the Eucharist, the Eucharist is at the same time the source of power for the mission. This is because the effect of a Eucharistic faith that is over-flowing, as described above, is evangelisation: 'it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.'¹⁴⁴ This is true also for the Church, for if the faith of the Church is authentically Eucharistic, then it must follow that the Church will also be truly missionary, as its members will be driven by the sacrament of love, and it is love which is at the heart of

¹⁴³ DC, 5.

¹⁴⁴ EN, 24.

the apostolate. Evangelisation is, very simply, ‘to bear witness ... to God revealed by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to bear witness that in His Son God has loved the world.’¹⁴⁵ Indeed, ‘the work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing.’¹⁴⁶ In this way, the love of Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament would be both the purpose of evangelisation but also the driving force behind all mission, purifying and clarifying the call to the apostolate:

Emphasis on the intrinsic relationship between the Eucharist and mission also leads to a rediscovery of the ultimate content of our proclamation. The more ardent the love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: to bring Christ to others. Not just a theory or a way of life inspired by Christ, but the gift of his very person.¹⁴⁷

In examining the intrinsic connection between the Eucharist and evangelisation, we can see that it is the Church’s Eucharistic identity that gives her a missionary identity. The Church ‘exists in order to evangelise,’¹⁴⁸ and she receives this vocation because ‘missionary activity wells up from the Church’s inner nature.’¹⁴⁹ At the heart of her inner nature is the Eucharist, which is why we can say that it is the Eucharist that makes the Church,¹⁵⁰ and which indeed makes the Church missionary, for the Eucharist is ‘the source and apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel.’¹⁵¹ The love of Jesus’ Real Presence requires proclamation, as it is the ultimate effort of God to tangibly reach people.¹⁵² Thus, if the laity are called to live the missionary vocation of the Church to the full, then they are called to be people of the Eucharist, for the call to evangelisation is God’s initiative, and must stem first

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁴⁷ SC, 86.

¹⁴⁸ EN, 14.

¹⁴⁹ AG, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1950).

¹⁵¹ PO, 5.

¹⁵² ‘Thy Eucharist fills all the centuries, makes Thee present in all places, and is the supreme effort of Thy love to attract all men to Thy heart.’ Trevino, *op. cit.*, 26.

from union with Him in the Sacrament which is the source and summit of Christian faith.

Indeed, this has been a clear message of magisterial teaching in the decades following the Second Vatican Council, with John Paul II declaring that, ‘there is no authentic celebration and adoration of the Eucharist that does not lead to mission.’¹⁵³ By qualifying the Eucharistic celebration necessary for mission as needing to be authentic, he is foreshadowing the teaching of Benedict XVI in his theological and magisterial writings. John Paul II’s successor makes it clear, as we observed in the previous chapter, that in order for true communion to take place, a spirit of adoration, awe and love must imbue the participation in the Mass. Thus, this same spirit is significant for the missionary zeal of the faithful, for:

The more lively the Eucharistic faith of the People of God, the deeper is its sharing in ecclesial life in steadfast commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to his disciples. The Church's very history bears witness to this. Every great reform has in some way been linked to the rediscovery of belief in the Lord's Eucharistic presence among his people.¹⁵⁴

The teaching on the new evangelisation, and the laity’s role within it, is undoubtedly a significant reform, or renewal for the 21st century. It is one that John Paul II formulated as a response to the post-Christian reality of countries previously evangelised, the context of globalization and the impetus for a renewed ardour in apostolic preaching.¹⁵⁵ This new evangelisation is entirely linked to a passion for a new sense of mission which, said the Pope, ‘cannot be left to a group of “specialists” but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God ... A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as [an] everyday commitment.’¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ John Paul II, *Address to Young People*, 9 October 2004.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 20/02/2013)

¹⁵⁴ SC, 6.

¹⁵⁵ NMI, 40.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The strength of any renewal, as Benedict XVI notes above, is dependent upon the depth of its roots in the Eucharist. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the magisterium has heavily emphasised both the role of the laity in evangelisation and the importance of a Eucharistic zeal amongst all the faithful. If, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Eucharistic adoration is a means to draw the Christian more deeply into the mystery of the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, which is to essentially strengthen their Eucharistic life, it can also play a role in their living out of the mission of the new evangelisation. While the working of the Holy Spirit means that the presence of the Eucharist within the Church will always be compelling the Church to mission, the effect of adoration as a source of contemplation, worship, and union, can propel that call to mission and give the lay faithful ‘the energy needed to make their lives an authentic sign of the presence of the risen Lord.’¹⁵⁷ The Eucharist thus makes the Church missionary, and the deeper their Eucharistic life, the more the laity will be able to fulfill their vocation to the apostolate.

3.4 Eucharistic adoration, revealing the supernatural power of the Blessed Sacrament

In order to bear fruit, mission must be driven by the Eucharist, because the liturgy is ‘the font from which all the Church’s power flows.’¹⁵⁸ Adoration is a ‘fuel’ for the mission in three ways: because the Eucharist holds supernatural power, because of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament itself, which can indeed draw those who need to be evangelised, and because of the impetus and graces for evangelisation that it imparts upon the adorer. In the case of the supernatural power present in the

¹⁵⁷ SC, 94.

¹⁵⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium, op. cit.*, 10.

Eucharist, we can consider the spiritual reality of mission and the primacy of grace. As the Holy Spirit is the principle agent of evangelisation, prayer must be at the centre of the mission, for ‘when this principle is not respected ... pastoral plans come to nothing.’¹⁵⁹

Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is efficacious, as ‘it makes concrete the presence of Christ in His real and ongoing work of redemption.’¹⁶⁰ As St. Peter Julian Eymard remarks: ‘By coming to adore our Lord in the Eucharist and uniting our adoration to His prayer and apostolate, we make Him work at the conversion of souls ... All the works of the apostolate put together are not more powerful than these prayers of Jesus Christ; in fact these prayers are the very condition and life of the apostolate.’¹⁶¹ The Eucharist, as the memorial of Christ’s passion, should then be ‘put to work’ for the apostolate, an apostolate which has a mission of evangelisation infinitely desired more by Christ than by us.

In other words, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not passive or static, but rather an active force for evangelisation. If we accept this, then ‘adoration evangelises by applying the salvation which starts from the Eucharistic Christ and passes through the Church and by the Church out into all of the situations in which man no longer responds to his vocation.’¹⁶² The graces at work in the Eucharist outside the celebration of the Mass, described by Rey above as essentially ‘passing out into the world’, stem from the fruitfulness of the Eucharist when lived as union, or relationship.

¹⁵⁹ NMI, 38.

¹⁶⁰ Bishop Dominique Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 9.

¹⁶¹ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 115-116.

¹⁶² Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, 11.

When Jesus said, ‘He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit’ (Jn 14:5), at the Last Supper, he implies a staying, a remaining in him. Indeed, John’s Gospel portrays the Last Supper as an extended time of prayer and contemplation, with the disciple Jesus loved lying close to his breast, and the disciples listening at length to Jesus before he prayed the priestly prayer. It is in this context that Jesus commands them to remain with him and promises that in this way they will ‘bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples’ (Jn 15:8). We can see that Eucharistic fruitfulness thus particularly manifests in the act of abiding in his love through adoration.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger described the Eucharist as ‘the pulse of time,’¹⁶³ but says that without adoration of the Blessed Sacrament this is essentially stified:

In many churches, the place of adoration hides away somewhere on the edge of things, like a bit of the past. What was more far-reaching was the way the Eucharist itself was shrinking to the space of a brief half-hour, so that it could no longer breath life into the building ... Confined to the space of the sacred rite, it was becoming a tiny island of time on the edge of the day, which as a whole was given over to the profane and hectic business of our worldly activity.¹⁶⁴

Adoration places the Eucharist at the centre of a faith community, be it a diocese, a parish, or a place of evangelisation, and in doing so places emphasis and reliance upon the power of God at work in the Sacrament. This power is for the mission given to the Church, for ‘Eucharistic adoration is an eschatological prayer, a prayer that desires, prepares, and hastens the advent of the Kingdom ... [it is] a glimpse of the glory that lies “beyond the veil” (Heb 6:19).’¹⁶⁵ Through adoration, the power of the Eucharist is able to permeate the faith community and send the laity

¹⁶³ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 96.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Dom Mark Daniel Kirby, ‘A Mystagogical Catechesis of Eucharistic Adoration’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 30-31.

into their places of mission imbued with power that comes entirely from God's gift upon the altar.

3.5 Christ evangelising in the Eucharist

Even the act of adoration by the layperson is an act of evangelisation, for it proclaims belief in the Blessed Sacrament, in the gift of God Himself. As John Paul II says, 'the image of the Church in worship before the Blessed Sacrament reminds us of the need to enter into a dialogue with our Redeemer.'¹⁶⁶ Along with all the faithful, the laity are called to proclaim the truth, that 'God is not hidden or eclipsed! He is present in the Eucharist. And the Church has the grand mission of guarding, defending and adoring Him ... of presenting Him to the world as the only salvation of humanity.'¹⁶⁷ The adoration of the laity in their life of mission, which is to say, in their 'everyday' life and in their particular times of service and proclamation, speaks to a readiness to bow down before God, to acknowledge and worship the author of Life, and to declare, without words, that 'they are not of this world, even as Christ is not of this world' (cf. Jn 17:16).

The practice of adoration is thus a crucial witness in a world that appears to be experiencing an 'eclipse of the sense of God,'¹⁶⁸ as it is a testimony to the truth of God, and the dignity of man:

Refusing the Lord Adoration goes against man, who then becomes capable of every degrading submission. Where God disappears, man remains entrapped in the slavery of various forms of idolatries. Adoring Jesus Christ, true God and true man, present in the Eucharist,

¹⁶⁶ John Paul II, Homily, 7 October 1989.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 15/02/2013)

¹⁶⁷ Bishop Giovanni D'Ercole, 'Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective', in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 62.

¹⁶⁸ EV, 23.

means celebrating true human freedom and, therefore, affirming man's greatest dignity.¹⁶⁹

Along with the witness given by the laity through adoration, be it in the simple act of a regular holy hour, or in participating in public times of exposition, there is also the power of Christ at work, evangelising through adoration. Christ never tires of effecting grace through the sacraments, nor is there any limit on his power to transform.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, in Eucharistic adoration Christ transforms those who come before him, as the Christian is adoring that which has already been transformed:

The Lord takes hold of bread and wine to make them pass out of, so to speak, their own state of being, and to place them in a new order of being. Even if they remain unchanged to our physical eyes, they have become profoundly different. There, wherever Christ is made present, it is impossible that nothing has changed. There, wherever He lays His hand, a new reality has come to be. To adore is to consent to letting ourselves also be transformed, converted, evangelized, so as to access our true humanity. Adoration is not a 'spiritual device or accessory'. It is a 'transforming force' (cf. Bl. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 62).¹⁷¹

In recent times we can see that the magisterium has relied upon this 'transforming force' in the actual practice of evangelisation. We can consider, for example, the opportunities the Church has to preach and evangelise to large groups of people, particularly at the World Youth Days. These events, with millions usually in attendance, are examples not only of the pastoral ministry of the Church to the young faithful but also, recognising the disengagement of many young people with religion, of mass-scale evangelisation. As mentioned previously, a central moment in the World Youth Days is the Eucharistic vigil with the Holy Father, during which prayer

¹⁶⁹ Monsignor Guido Marini, 'Celebrating the Feast of *Corpus Christi*', in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 79. See also: 'Before any activity, before the world can change there must be worship. Worship alone sets us truly free; worship alone gives us the criteria for our action.' Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2005. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 15/02/2013)

¹⁷⁰ Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Grace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1962), 94-111.

¹⁷¹ Rey, 'Adoration and the New Evangelisation', 13.

is made in adoration and there is the notable experience of millions of people praying in silence before the exposed Blessed Sacrament.¹⁷² This is one of the most significant moments for evangelisation at these gatherings, an opportunity to witness through the faith of those gathered and to allow the graces of the Real Presence of Christ to touch hearts.

There are many ways to incorporate adoration in evangelisation, be it through public exposition, processions, Mercy Nights,¹⁷³ or even the simple act of leaving the church doors open during times of street evangelisation or public ministry, so that people who are encountered by evangelisation have the opportunity to make a step towards encountering Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. By uniting these endeavours in evangelisation to adoration, the power of the Eucharist can work to evangelise those who gaze upon it. This evangelisation requires no ‘props’ or even words, beyond perhaps those of hymns or Scripture. It does not require the laypeople who provide coordination and support to be theologians or apologists, but simply evangelists who make adoration available through their prayers and presence, and who have the courage to invite others to meet Christ there, in the Eucharist.

Adoration is a missionary activity without cultural limitation, which is not to say that all cultures understand and embrace the doctrine of the Eucharist, but that Christ Himself is the ultimate cross-cultural evangelist, for he draws all men to

¹⁷² D’Ercole recalled these events in Cologne in 2005 and in Sydney in 2008: ‘The Eucharistic vigil was an incredible experience of prayerful silence in the night. Thousands and thousands of young people from every part of the world gathered around the Successor of Peter in Adoration of Christ, truly present in the Eucharistic Sacrament. In that night, I can testify that there were many conversions. Youths who came only out of curiosity, found a light which illuminated their lives ... When one listens to Jesus, creating the necessary conditions for opening the heart to divine Grace, authentic miracles occur and hearts are opened to the power of the Holy Spirit.’ Giovanni D’Ercole, ‘Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective’, 63.

¹⁷³ Mercy Nights are a common tool for evangelisation in Western Europe and the English speaking world, incorporating exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayerful music, and perhaps a testimony or people available to pray with those attending.

himself by revealing their deepest identity. Adoration is truly an authentic type of evangelisation, for it is nothing less than the revelation of Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament, to man. This revelation reflects the essence of evangelisation:

Missionary activity is closely bound up even with human nature itself and its aspirations. For by manifesting Christ the Church reveals to men the real truth about their condition and their whole calling, since Christ is the source and model of that redeemed humanity, imbued with brotherly love, sincerity and a peaceful spirit, to which they all aspire. Christ and the Church, which bears witness to Him by preaching the Gospel, transcend every peculiarity of race or nation and therefore cannot be considered foreign anywhere or to anybody.¹⁷⁴

There is a manifest need for man to discover himself in Christ, and the capacity for this to occur in Eucharistic adoration. The revelation of Christ, which is the continuation of his mission of evangelisation, takes place in the Eucharist and was promised by Christ, when he told his disciples, ‘I am with you always, to the close of the age’ (Mt 28:20). There has, after all, been no greater evangelist than Christ, and he is as much our example now as ever, through his presence in the Eucharist.

With this in mind, let us consider the complex layers of evangelisation outlined by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, through the lens of adoration, substituting the Eucharist, Christ himself, for the Christian or the Church. When Paul VI writes that the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness we can think of the sign that is given in adoration, a ‘wordless witness’ that must ‘stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see’ the Eucharist: why has Christ made himself like this? Why does he remain in this way? What or who inspires him to be given in the Eucharist? Why is he in our midst? We can think of the Eucharist when we consider Paul VI’s commentary on the witness that is given in silence: ‘Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one.’¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ AG, 8.

¹⁷⁵ EN, 21.

Through the gift of contemplation, the Eucharist answers these questions. For two millennia the saints have discovered that ‘...all truths tend to the Eucharist; and that the final word on everything is the Eucharist, since It is Jesus Christ.’¹⁷⁶ This is the ultimate proclamation that is required in evangelisation, the proclamation of the Word Itself. This is absolutely necessary because ‘there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.’¹⁷⁷

For the Eucharist to have the power to proclaim the Word, both to the faithful, who are constantly in need of evangelisation, and to those who are being drawn to the Christian faith, an understanding of the Eucharist is needed.¹⁷⁸ By demonstrating the Real Presence of Christ within the Eucharist, he is, in a sense, allowed to be himself, and to fully proclaim his name, teaching, life, promises, kingdom and mystery. In other words, the more effectively the Church demonstrates what the Eucharist really is, the more the Eucharist proclaims Christ. Worship of the Eucharist in adoration is thus a means to proclaim the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, which is central to the evangelisation.

The final and most important element of evangelisation is the response, for ‘the proclamation only reaches full development when it is listened to, accepted and assimilated, and when it arouses a genuine adherence in the one who has thus received it.’¹⁷⁹ Adoration has an important role to play in this response amongst those who join the laity of the Church, as it can be a source for a lived union with Christ to

¹⁷⁶ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 179–180.

¹⁷⁷ EN, 22.

¹⁷⁸ As discussed in chapter 2, catechesis is an important element to the Church’s Eucharistic belief, and adoration can also play a role in catechising the faithful.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

the service of ‘adherence to the Church, and acceptance of the sacraments, which manifest and support this adherence through the grace which they confer.’¹⁸⁰

The graces of drawing near to the Eucharist in adoration, of worshipping God and being transformed by the Presence of Christ effect a cyclical conversion in the Christian, which ultimately leads to evangelisation. This experience of conversion is central to mission, for if anyone is to evangelise there must be a constant renewal in accepting the Word: ‘The first person encountered by mission is the missionary himself. He must let himself be evangelized by Christ, whom he will have the vocation to announce. The New Evangelisation is a school of personal sanctification, but also of conversion and interior purification.’¹⁸¹

Paul VI emphasises the centrality of ongoing conversion in evangelisation, declaring that ‘the Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself ... she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love.’¹⁸² As Christ evangelises in the Eucharist, adoration is a place in which the Church can be renewed in her mission, for worship and intimacy with the Blessed Sacrament brings fruitfulness (Jn 15:4-5) and ‘heals the Church of spiritual and missionary sterility.’¹⁸³ This is true for the Church and her parishes and communities as a whole, but it also must be true for individual laypeople. The call to evangelise requires, as with all aspects of the Christian faith, a personal response as well as a communal effort. Taking adoration as our model, the layperson is renewed, reconverted and prepared for the mission by Christ himself.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, 7-8.

¹⁸² EN, 15.

¹⁸³ Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, 9.

¹⁸⁴ ‘To better evangelize the adorer must first be evangelized. He must let the merciful love of Christ heal him, liberate him, enlighten him, raise him.’ Florian Racine, ‘Spiritual Fruits of Adoration in Parishes’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 202.

3.6 The impetus of evangelisation for the adorer

Adoration is a means to further the Eucharistic life of mission, in the context of it being a source for spiritual strength and a direct, and prolonged, encounter with Christ, which responds directly to the call to a Eucharistic spirituality emphasised by magisterial teaching. Benedict XVI sees such a faith as the driving force for evangelisation, saying that, 'For lay persons too, Eucharistic spirituality must be the interior motor of every activity, and no dichotomy is acceptable between faith and life in their mission of spreading the spirit of Christianity in the world.'¹⁸⁵ Benedict is echoing the exhortation of his predecessor, who declared that, 'To evangelise the world there is need of apostles who are 'experts' in the celebration, adoration and contemplation of the Eucharist.'¹⁸⁶

If contemplation is at the heart of the apostolate, this cannot be true only for those whose vocation is to the contemplative, as stated plainly by John Paul II in this Message to Young People:

How can we fail to admit that St John of the Cross was right? He used to say: "Those who are very active and think they can embrace the world with their preaching and external activities, should remember that they would be more useful to the Church and more pleasing to God, not to mention the good example they would set, were they to spend half as much time with him in prayer". Help us, Jesus, to understand that in order "to do" in your Church, also in the field of the new evangelization that is so urgently needed, we must first learn "to be", that is, to stay with you, in your sweet company, in adoration. Authentic, effective and true apostolic action can only come from intimate communion with you.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Benedict XVI, Homily, 23 October 2005.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 20/02/2013)

¹⁸⁶ John Paul II, *Message for World Mission Sunday*, 19 April 2004.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 15/02/2013)

¹⁸⁷ John Paul II, *Message to Young People*, 15 March 2005.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 20/02/2013)

John Paul II says that apostolic action ‘comes’ from communion with Christ. In other words, it is our contemplation that leads to action, as if evangelisation were the natural consequence of prayer, worship, and adoration. Indeed, ‘the Church’s mission derives not only from the Lord’s mandate but also from the profound demands of God’s life within us,’¹⁸⁸ which indicates that for the praying Christian there is a compulsion to evangelise.¹⁸⁹ In the specific example of Eucharistic adoration, Dom Kirby OSB argues that it:

... is an eschatological prayer, a prayer that desires, prepares, and hastens the advent of the Kingdom. The adorer grows in awareness of the dawning fulfillment of the prophecy in the psalm intoned by Jesus from the cross:

All the ends of the earth shall remember,
and shall be converted to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall adore in His sight (Ps
21:28).

Made in this spirit, Eucharistic adoration delivers the soul from a narrow preoccupation with self and, by stretching it to Catholic dimensions, inflames it with the apostolic zeal of the Heart of Christ.¹⁹⁰

As the adorer grows to understand, both in mind and heart, the divinity of God, and the worship owed to him, there is an impetus to evangelisation, for ‘those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him.’¹⁹¹ Since adoration is, in a specific way, a prayer that encounters the Real Presence of Christ, this allows for the evangelisation that flows from that prayer to be particular to announcing the person of Jesus.

Furthermore, if Christ has been encountered, testifying to him need not be onerous but, as we can see in the First Letter of John, a source of joy. The Evangelist

¹⁸⁸ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. English translation: *The Mission of Christ the Redeemer* (7 December 1990), 11.

¹⁸⁹ ‘To evangelise is part of Christian identity itself. The gift of God in Christ is of such a superabundance that it cannot be fully welcomed without overflowing towards others.’
Dominique Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, 10.

¹⁹⁰ Kirby, ‘A Mystagogical Catechesis of Eucharistic Adoration’, 30-31.

¹⁹¹ NMI, 20.

recalls Christ, the word of life, ‘which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands ... that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us ... and we are writing this that our joy may be complete’ (1 Jn 1: 1-4).

Added to these considerations is that a close relationship with Christ, through seeing him and looking upon him in adoration, can be for the lay person a source for growth in holiness, a quality which is central to evangelisation:

Holiness, whether ascribed to Popes well-known to history or to humble lay and religious figures, from one continent to another of the globe, has emerged more clearly as the dimension which expresses best the mystery of the Church. Holiness, a message that convinces without the need for words, is the living reflection of the face of Christ.¹⁹²

An important consideration in the journey of the laity in their call to holiness and evangelisation is also encouragement. Unlike those in the Body of Christ who are called to priestly or religious life, the laity do not necessarily have the same structures of support by nature of their vocation. This comes with living in the world, with its variety of struggles, obstacles, and temptations. Adoration can be a significant source of strength for the apostolate, removing a focus from oneself and the areas that are lacking, and turning the gaze to Christ himself. In this way, ‘adoration Christianizes our interiority, delivering it from subjectivism, from sentimentalism, from narcissism, so that it can unite itself to Christ in his work of salvation.’¹⁹³

Indeed, Christ must be the source of the hope in all aspects of the apostolate, including, and especially, the challenging task of evangelisation. Adoration offers a particular way to draw near to the source of hope, who is Christ, and to reflect upon the mysteries contained in his continuing Presence within the Eucharist, which

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹³ Rey, ‘Adoration and the New Evangelisation’, 9.

encompasses his death and resurrection and ongoing gift of self: ‘To contemplate Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is to lean upon this victory won by Christ and which the Church proposes for our contemplation, so that in all of the difficulties we face in announcing the Gospel we may find the strength of the faith in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.’¹⁹⁴

If Christ is placed truly at the centre of the layperson’s life and response to the apostolate, then their efforts are never in isolation, and great encouragement can be found in the unity of the mission. This is true in practice, in the Church being built up by men and women joining together to worship the Eucharist throughout the day. It is also true in the spiritual realm, whereby it is through this personal act of encounter with the Eucharistic Lord that reveals and develops ‘the social mission which is contained in the Eucharist and [which] desires to break down barriers, not only the barriers between the Lord and us but also and above all those that separate us from one another.’¹⁹⁵

3.7 Conclusion

The call to evangelisation for the laity can never be in isolation, and the Eucharist is the true source of unity within the Church. United to the Eucharistic Christ in adoration, the layperson can respond to their missionary vocation through a foundation of prayer, contemplation, and intimacy with Christ. Adoration, as a form of prayer, is a fuel for this life of intimacy with Christ which “spills over”, in a sense, into evangelisation. Through adoration, the mission of the layperson can be fuelled by the Eucharist, purified by the presence of Christ, and ultimately ordered towards

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁹⁵ Benedict XVI, *Christmas Address*, 22 December 2005.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 01/03/2013)

the sacraments. This particular spirit of evangelisation is one that is, by nature of the Eucharist, lived in communion with the whole Church. As this communion is central to the capacity of the layperson to respond to their apostolate, this will be the focus of chapter 4.

Chapter 4 Communion through adoration

The call of every Christian to the apostolate, that is, to prayer and to evangelisation, is founded on their communion with Christ and his Body, the Church. This communion comes through Baptism and Confirmation, and is strengthened and nourished at the Eucharistic table. Through their apostolate, the laity both witness to the world the human need for communion, and act for the increase of communion itself, by means of evangelisation and their presence in the world as ones united to Christ.¹⁹⁶

This paper takes for its understanding of communion the definition given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which spoke of its ‘double dimension: the *vertical* (communion with God) and the *horizontal* (communion among men).’¹⁹⁷ This communion with God and with others is at the heart of the layperson’s identity and as such this chapter will examine the way that the laity must live communion in order to fulfill their apostolate. In making this study, this chapter will consider the role Eucharistic adoration can play in the living out of communion, and the extent to which the practice can foster and further communion in the world, within the Church, and at the parish level.

4.1 The significance of communion for the laity

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, Henri de Lubac published his seminal work, *Catholicism*.¹⁹⁸ There he begins by discussing questions of individual salvation versus solidarity, of the isolated Christian versus the Church as communion.

¹⁹⁶ Schindler, ‘Toward a Culture of Life: The Eucharist, the Restoration of Creation and the “Worldly” task of the Laity’, 682-3.

¹⁹⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* (28 May 1992), 3.

¹⁹⁸ De Lubac, *op. cit.*, 1950.

Surveying the grave misunderstandings that he saw to be prevalent at the time, about the nature of human unity in the Christian faith, de Lubac poses a question that strikes at the heart of the formation of the faithful:

We are accused of being individualists even in spite of ourselves, by the logic of our faith, whereas in reality Catholicism is essentially social. It is social in the deepest sense of the word: not merely in its applications in the field of natural institutions but first and foremost in itself, in the heart of its mystery, in the essence of its dogma ... Nevertheless, if such a misunderstanding has arisen and entrenched itself ... is it not our own fault? ... If so many observers, who are not lacking in acumen or in religious spirit, are so grievously mistaken about the essence of Catholicism, is it not an indication that Catholics should make an effort to understand it better themselves?¹⁹⁹

De Lubac suggested that many in the Church lacked an understanding of the essence of the Church as being for the unity of humankind, and of humankind with God. Along with the work of other theologians in this vein, this was to influence the Council Fathers at Vatican II, where ‘much was done ... to bring about a clearer understanding of the Church as *communion* and its concrete application to life.’²⁰⁰ The Council Fathers opened the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church by declaring that ‘the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.’²⁰¹ Thus, the call to the apostolate is to this purpose, the ‘spreading of the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ.’²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ De Lubac, *op. cit.*, 1950, x.

²⁰⁰ CL, 19.

²⁰¹ LG, 1. De Lubac’s influence is clearly seen: ‘If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term, she really makes him present.’ De Lubac, *op. cit.*, 1950, 29.

²⁰² AA, 2.

The understanding of communion cannot be separated from the sacrament of the Eucharist, which ‘contains the whole mystery of our salvation [and] is also especially the sacrament of unity.’²⁰³ This was clear and significant for early Christians, where there was a visible unity despite their diversity, with people ‘coming together from very different situations: man and woman, rich and poor, nobleman and slave, intellectual and ignorant, the ascetic and the sinner converted from a dissolute life.’²⁰⁴ In such a setting the unity St. Paul wrote about would have been striking: ‘Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of one bread’ (1 Cor 10:17).

This unity is not only between the individual Christian and the other, or between the individual Christian and Christ, however. There exists in the Eucharist not only the Body and Blood of Christ, but also his Mystical Body, which contains and unites the Church militant, expectant and triumphant.²⁰⁵ Thus, the Eucharist is, argues Eastern theologian John Zizioulas, ‘the manifestation of the eschatological community in its totality.’²⁰⁶

To live their Christian life authentically, that is, to be fully themselves, the layperson is called to understand the communion they are called to in the Church, the way the Church lives that communion for the world, and that the Eucharist is

²⁰³ De Lubac, *op cit.*, 1950, 38.

²⁰⁴ Marini, ‘Celebrating the Feast of *Corpus Christi*’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 71. Ratzinger also comments on this: ‘It was characteristic of the Eucharist, then, in the Mediterranean world in which Christianity first developed, for an aristocrat who had found his way into Christianity to sit there side by side with a Corinthian dock worker, a miserable slave, who under Roman law was not even regarded as a man but was treated as chattel. It was characteristic of the Eucharist for the philosopher to sit next to the illiterate man, the converted prostitute and the converted tax collector next to the religious ascetic who had found his way to Jesus Christ. And we can see in the writings of the New Testament how people resisted this again and again, wanted to stay in their own circle, and yet this very thing remained the point of the Eucharist: gathering together, crossing the boundaries, and leading men through the Lord into a new unity. Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 108-109.

²⁰⁵ ‘Christ’s sacramental Body makes Christ’s mystical Body.’ Anscar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 254.

²⁰⁶ John Zizioulas, ‘The Early Christian Community’, in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, 34.

fundamental to that communion. This is at the heart of their Christian identity, and cannot be separated from the identity of the Church, which ‘is entirely concentrated in the Eucharist.’²⁰⁷ Father Paul McPartlan, in one of his studies of Eucharistic ecclesiology, summarises the thinking of de Lubac in a way that is helpful for our approach to this topic: ‘His stress in *Catholicism* that theology ought to draw primarily upon the Church’s *worship* implies that it is *at prayer* that the Church is most herself.’²⁰⁸ Communion is lived firstly and most profoundly through the Eucharist, which ‘appears as the culmination of all the sacraments in perfecting our communion with God the Father by identification with his only-begotten Son through the working of the Holy Spirit.’²⁰⁹ This prompts us to examine the role Eucharistic devotion can play, through adoration, in furthering communion.

4.2 The mission of communion in the world

Evangelisation is a proclamation of ‘man’s profound and definitive calling,’²¹⁰ for the purpose that all would ‘reach fulfilment in a communion with the one and only divine Absolute.’²¹¹ The Church exists for this true evangelisation, and it is because of this that we can say that, ‘the Church still *in via* has as mission the achieving of the unity of all human beings with God and one another.’²¹² As a result, ‘communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that *communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in*

²⁰⁷ Henri De Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery* (Ireland: Ecclesia Press, 1967), 5.

²⁰⁸ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 13.

²⁰⁹ EE, 34.

²¹⁰ EV, 28.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²¹² Francis Cardinal George, ‘The Parish in the Mission of the Church’, in *What Is A Parish?*,

*communion.*²¹³ To be called to the task of evangelisation, as all lay people are, is to be called to be a force for communion in the world.

In the midst of what John Paul II described as ‘the culture of death’ there is an ever-pressing need to bring about this communion, to reveal humanity to itself, for humanity is ‘organically one by its divine structure; it is the Church’s mission to reveal to men that pristine unity that they have lost, to restore it and complete it.’²¹⁴ This unity of men comes from their origin in Christ, as ‘all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made’ (Jn 1:3). Thus, all people ‘are called on to become one in Christ, and the Church is fundamentally that unity,’²¹⁵ as it is his Body on earth.

The Church, and the faithful through their participation, reveal this unity that humankind is called to in a particular way through prayer and the liturgy: ‘The prayer taught us by Christ makes clear in its very first phrase that monotheism postulates the brotherhood of all men. It implied that he assumed the original unity of all men and that he was effectively to re-unite them all in one same worship.’²¹⁶ The Eucharist, as the source of communion, is thus the most powerful means for the Christian to further unity through prayer:

In the Eucharist there is found the secret of the renewal of the universe: it is the victory of love over hate and the victory of love over death ... the explosion of good which conquers evil and thus triggers the transformations which change the world. Christ has redeemed the world: by His death and resurrection the essential has been accomplished, at this time it is our turn to enter into this dynamic nature of salvation in order to access His mystery and to be nourished by His Body and by His Blood. In the Eucharist, in the Bread and the wine, Christ has left us His passion, His offering, His life, which is love

²¹³ CL, 32.

²¹⁴ De Lubac, *op cit.*, 1950, 19.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

without end. When we come to the Eucharist, we become one people in which the love of God is circulated.²¹⁷

Adoration is a way to further communion in the world, for ‘true Eucharistic piety ... is no devout individualism,²¹⁸ but rather the deep and transforming encounter with the God who ‘made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one.’²¹⁹ To draw near, in prayer, to the Real Presence of Christ, is to encounter the longing of God for unity with man, and also to respond, on behalf of humanity, for its longing for God. This is man’s ‘dignity’, that ‘he is called to communion with God,’²²⁰ and it is for this communion that creation has been ‘groaning’ with anticipation (cf. Rom 8:22-23). The longing of humanity for God was personified in the longing of Israel for the Messiah, with Jesus’ coming responding ‘to an expectation present in the people of Israel, in the whole of humanity and ultimately in creation itself.’²²¹ Through adoration, the Catholic seeks out Jesus in the temple, acknowledging their call to communion, and that of humankind.

Writing about the eschatological age in relation to the Eucharist, Benedict XVI examines the mission of the Church for the fulfilment of God’s promises to his chosen people:

In the calling of the Twelve, which is to be understood in relation to the twelve tribes of Israel, and in the command he gave them at the Last Supper, before his redemptive passion, to celebrate his memorial, Jesus showed that he wished to transfer to the entire community which he had founded the task of being, within history, the sign and instrument of the eschatological gathering that had its origin in him. Consequently, every Eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the Eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. Is 25:6-9) and

²¹⁷ D’Ercole, ‘Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 62.

²¹⁸ De Lubac, *op cit.*, 1950, 49.

²¹⁹ LG, 13.

²²⁰ GS, 19.

²²¹ SC, 31.

described in the New Testament as "the marriage-feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7-9), to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of saints.²²²

By prolonging the adoration of the Real Presence, through worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass, the Church allows this foretaste of our heavenly communion to permeate the world. Practically, the act of adoration should intensify the Christian's awareness of the communion we are called to, which in turn increases the understanding of 'human life as a relationship, a gift of God, the fruit and sign of his love.'²²³ This can bear fruit within the heart of the Christian and also in his life, in relationships, work, acts of service and the spirit of charity with which he conducts himself. It is because of this 'comprehensive sense of community and relationship,'²²⁴ which is rooted firstly in the person of Jesus, has been instituted by God in the Church, and can be nurtured and strengthened through the practice of adoration, that the laity's mission must be 'lived and realized *in communion and for the increase of communion itself*.'²²⁵

4.3 Adoration as a way to deepen communion in the Church

Jesus himself prayed for communion within the Church as the means of witness to the world, entreating the Father at the Last Supper for unity: 'The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me' (Jn 17:22-23). In these words, there is a clear call to communion within the Body of

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ EV, 81.

²²⁴ Schindler, 'Toward a Culture of Life: The Eucharist, the Restoration of Creation and the "Worldly" task of the Laity' 682.

²²⁵ CL, 14.

Christ, the Church, for the building up of the Body and also for the mission of evangelisation.

This call is as much for the laity as for the visible hierarchical structures of the Church. John Paul II outlined this at the beginning of the third millennium, declaring the mission of making ‘the Church the home and the school of communion’ as the great challenge facing the entire faithful.²²⁶ This mission is imperative because the greater the unity of the Church, the more she will be ‘capable of translating the treasure of faith ... the more it will also be truly evangelizing.’²²⁷

As it is the Eucharist that ‘is the source from which communion between the members of the mystical Body of Christ draws ever new vigour,’²²⁸ this sacrament must be the basis of the efforts towards communion within the Church. This is, quite simply, because the unity of the faithful is so deeply desired by Christ. By worshipping the Eucharist, which is ‘the living heart of the Church,’²²⁹ there is true unity, ‘...accomplished in the heart, because communion is a union of hearts.’²³⁰

While this may initially appear contradictory to communion, that is, that central to the unity of the faithful is the individual Christian’s experience of unity between their heart and the heart of Christ revealed in the Eucharist, Dennis J. Murphy writes that, ‘the interior life is not in opposition to community; in fact, without a particular form of interior life, community, in the Christian meaning of the

²²⁶ NMI, 43.

²²⁷ EN, 64.

²²⁸ John Paul II, Angelus, 20 February 2005.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 20 March 2013).

²²⁹ John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 85.

²³⁰ Jules Chevalier, *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* (Paris: Librairie de Vic et Amat, 1900), 241.

word, is not possible.’²³¹ Indeed, Ratzinger suggests that ‘the personal approach to Christ, the “I” prayer, is the first part of Communion.’²³² He explains that:

What is given us here is not a piece of a body, not a thing, but him, the Resurrected one himself – the person who shares himself with us in his love, which runs right through the Cross. This means that receiving Communion is always a personal act. It is never merely a ritual performed in common, which we can just pass off as we do with other social routines. In Communion I enter into the Lord, who is communicating himself to me. Sacramental Communion must therefore always be also spiritual Communion. That is why the Liturgy changes over, before Communion, from the liturgical ‘we’ to ‘I’. This makes demands on me personally. At this point I have to move out, go toward him, call to him. The Eucharistic fellowship of the Church is not a collectivity, in which fellowship is achieved by leveling down to the lowest common denominator, but fellowship is created precisely by our each being ourself. It does not rest on the suppression of the self, on collectivisation, but arises through our truly setting out, with our whole self, and entering into this new fellowship of the Lord.²³³

In other words, personal relationships with Christ in the Eucharist are necessary for the faith community to have a shared relationship with Christ. As communion is ‘not a collectivity’, but rather a way for each person to live their true calling and dignity, we can understand Eucharistic adoration as a way for the Christian, drawing near to Christ, to discover himself more and more in light of the Eucharist. Any discovery of one’s inherent dignity should lead to a richer understanding not only of oneself, one’s life and ultimate call to communion, but also that of one’s fellow man:

If we have truly contemplated the face of Christ, our pastoral planning will necessarily be inspired by the “new commandment” which he gave us: “Love one another, as I have loved you” ... Communion is the fruit and demonstration of that love which springs from the heart of the

²³¹ Murphy, *op. cit.*, 91. See also Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith: ‘Private prayer does not necessarily take one away from the community. It builds community ... Jesus too adored the Father in private as well as in public prayer, like those in the temple and those in the synagogue. Thus every act of Adoration, private or communitarian, has a salubrious effect on the community as well as the individual.’ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, ‘Addressing Objections to Adoration’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 164.

²³² Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 82.

²³³ Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 81-82.

Eternal Father and is poured out upon us through the Spirit which Jesus gives us, to make us all “one heart and one soul.”²³⁴

To adore is to be in the presence of Christ, who is love, and who teaches those who sit at his feet how to love. The layperson’s commitment to adoration should bear fruit in charity and communion, for such is the aid to prayer and contemplation given by the worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass. Benedict XVI asserts that Eucharistic worship must include ‘the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn ... Love can be ‘commanded’ because it has first been given.’²³⁵ As it is the love of Christ himself who is given through contemplation and worship of the Eucharist, this is consequently a love for others, because, ‘union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own.’²³⁶

Through a personal and profound encounter with the love of God that is the source of all unity, Eucharistic adoration is, as we have seen, a way for the individual layperson to grow in communion. The tradition of the Church, through the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Forty Hours devotion and Eucharistic processions, however, indicate that adoration should not only be an individual practice. There are benefits in the practice of group or parish adoration, as encouraged by Benedict XVI in

Sacramentum Caritatis:

The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ. For this reason, besides encouraging individual believers to make time for personal prayer before the

²³⁴ NMI, 42.

²³⁵ Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. English translation: *God is Love*, (25 December 2005), 14. (Hereafter DCE)

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

Sacrament of the Altar, I feel obliged to urge parishes and other church groups to set aside times for collective adoration.²³⁷

The Church, in her dioceses, parishes and communities, is imbued with a spirit of Eucharistic communion when she is filled with a laity that seeks individually, as well as in their families, and parishes, to love and worship the Eucharist in a way that transforms their own lives and those around them. Thus, it must be through the effort of the whole Church that the laity is encouraged individually, and as a whole, to a transforming life of worship. This worship is directed towards the communion that is manifestly the desire of God: ‘The Church who bends her knee before the Lord, also bends her heart to His will ... Thus, in the act of Adoration is present already the figure of the new world, renewed by the power and love of God in Christ, also becoming the history of all of us through the Church.’²³⁸

4.4 Adoration as a way to deepen communion in the parish

The question of the laity and communion in the Church should address the parish, for ‘the ecclesial community, while always having a universal dimension, finds its most immediate and visible expression in a parish.’²³⁹ For the vast majority of the laity, the parish will be where they ‘live out their vocations as baptized members of Christ’s body. For the average Catholic it is the parish that first and foremost constitutes their experience of Church.’²⁴⁰ For this reason it can be referred to as ‘the heartbeat of the Church.’²⁴¹ As a Eucharistic community, the parish is

²³⁷ SC, 68.

²³⁸ Marini, ‘Celebrating the Feast of *Corpus Christi*’, 79.

²³⁹ CL, 26.

²⁴⁰ Ron Lewinski, ‘Bonds of Communion between Pastors and Parishes’, in *What is a Parish?*, 145.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

founded on a rich and robust ‘theological reality,’²⁴² with the Eucharist as ‘the living source for its upbuilding and the sacramental bond of its being in full communion with the whole Church.’²⁴³

Communion is fundamental to the life of a parish, as this is the parish’s fundamental vocation and mission, ‘to be a “place” in the world for the community of believers to gather together as “sign” and “instrument” of the vocation of all to communion...’²⁴⁴ Communion in the parish is, as is the case in the whole Church, built upon the Eucharist, particularly as the life of the faithful in their parish is often most visibly the living out of sacramental life. The Eucharist, which ‘brings Christian initiation to completion and represents the centre and goal of all sacramental life,’²⁴⁵ should thus be at the centre of parish life and initiative.

John Paul II asked the question of what communion would mean in practice, and his meditations on this can provide an overview for parish pastoral planning: ‘Let us have no illusions: unless we follow a spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.’²⁴⁶ This is indeed a penetrating and challenging exhortation to a radical living of spiritual communion at the parish level, beyond mere external or social mechanisms of unity.

²⁴² CL, 26. It should be noted that there is a lack of a rigorous theological study on the question of the parish. John Paul II makes an attempt to address this in CL, and some resources are available in this area, but it is notably scarce. This does not, however, diminish the importance of the parish to the lives of the laity and the life of the whole Church. See, in particular, C. Floristan, *The Parish, Eucharistic Community* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), and Earnest Larsen, *Spiritual Growth: Key to Parish Renewal* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1978).

²⁴³ *Ibid.* See also: ‘We should likely take the fact that the parish is directly suited to the celebration of the Eucharist very seriously, even to the degree that all of the initiatives of the parish proceed from and are ordered to the celebration of the Eucharist.’ Michael Sweeney, ‘Can You Tell Me What a Parish is?’, in *What is a Parish?*, 6.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁴⁵ SC, 17.

²⁴⁶ NMI, 43.

For parishes to fulfill their true vocation they are called to be places of communion and love, in which there is true unity between members of the Church, as well as a missionary openness that makes each one ‘a house of welcome to all and a place of service to all.’²⁴⁷ In considering how parishes can respond to this call, we can examine ways in which the Eucharist can be ‘put to work’, so to speak.

Adoration offers a way of communion for the laity through prayer made before, and in union with, the sacrament of communion, from which all pastoral fertility stems.²⁴⁸

As explained by Father Florian Racine, ‘since the Eucharist is the sacrament of communion with God and neighbour, the more we live the Eucharist, the more our communion with Christ is authentic and therefore the more our love of neighbour is concrete.’²⁴⁹

Offering adoration as a means towards furthering communion in the parish is in contrast to initiatives that begin with action before contemplation. There is a strong emphasis within the Western Church on the building of community and yet this should begin with a spiritual foundation, ultimately in Christ himself present in the Blessed Sacrament, as opposed to ‘programs and activities [that] have a tendency to become the ends in themselves, rather than the means to accomplish the mission of the Church *ad extra*.’²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ CL, 27.

²⁴⁸ SC, 10.

²⁴⁹ Florian Racine, “Spiritual Fruits of Adoration in Parishes”, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 209.

²⁵⁰ Daniel Barnett, ‘Trinity and the Parish’, in *What is a Parish?*, 176. Barnett continues: ‘...many parishes and dioceses consume vast amounts of time and energy in the task of “creating community” between various groups which are *presumed* to be separate, but which in reality are already united at a very profound level ... As a result of this error, the practical object of pastoral activity becomes the completion of tasks and maintenance of programs, rather than the formation of persons. In the meantime, lacking an effective way to unite the individuals of each parish (much less an entire diocese) for a vague and ill-defined common good, the Church’s mission to the world is weakened.’

As adoration of the Eucharist is grounded in and centred on Christ himself, it fulfils a need for a central activity of the parish, outside of the Mass, which is the high-point of parish life, to be genuinely Christ-centred and united in the worship of his sacrament.²⁵¹ By placing an emphasis on giving due praise and worship to the sacrament, over and above their own activities and services, the laity can discover the important truth that ‘they do not exist for themselves; they exist for the mission of the Church.’²⁵² This in no way should reflect an undermining of the charisms given to the lay faithful in the service of their parish and the broader Church, but rather orders them correctly, with Christ at the centre, and all else following from him. This understanding, of the individual at the service of the community, and the community at the service of the universal Church, is directed towards the understanding that the parish is ‘called to form one entity in Christ ... to bear witness in your life to this community vocation ... [to] undertake to grow in Christ not only as individuals, but also as a parish.’²⁵³

The visible and tangible sign of communion that is given through adoration is one that can reflect the Eucharistic ‘victory over the divisions that flow from personal sin and collective selfishness,’²⁵⁴ and show the Eucharistic community as a ‘model and instrument of a reconciled humanity.’²⁵⁵ Just as the reception of the sacrament is

²⁵¹ This presupposes that a parish follows the directions of Canon 937 in making the Blessed Sacrament available for adoration in the tabernacle for at least several hours a day, or that the parish organises a roster for periods of, or perpetual, exposition. The latter possibility raises important practical considerations, which in their own way can contribute to the building of communion. For example, a common model for parish adoration allows for at least two adorers during a rostered hour, and the need for these adorers to be in contact with other parishioners in the event of needing to find a replacement at any point.

²⁵² Barnett, ‘Trinity and the Parish’, 179.

²⁵³ John Paul II, Homily, 1 February 1981, quoted by Michael Sweeney, ‘Can You Tell Me What a Parish is?’, in *What is a Parish?*, 5. Also available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (in Italian, Spanish & Portuguese).

²⁵⁴ John Paul II, Homily, 8 October 1989. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm (accessed 25 March 2013).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

a means to sanctify the faithful in ‘mystic communion, making them one body with him and among themselves,’²⁵⁶ the adoration of the sacrament unites the community in worship and prayer, furthering the communion of the parish as each individual grows closer to the Eucharistic Lord.

More than a particular pastoral emphasis or any variety of committees, adoration sees no separation between age, gender, background, or even interest, gifting or temperament. This is particularly ideal for the parish setting, if we consider the essence of its structure:

The territorially based division of the Church into dioceses and parishes . . . is not simply a matter of administrative convenience but rather reflects a profound theological concern touching on the very identity of the Church and its mission. The application of the principle of territoriality manifests the commitment of the Church to be one people of every race and language. This insistence on a territorial division rather than one based on social, cultural, ethnic, intellectual or other grounds demonstrates the authenticity of the Church’s catholicity.²⁵⁷

Adoration in the parish may also serve, then, in some way, to temper any congregationalist tendencies.²⁵⁸ The Eucharist is the true unifier, and the heart of our shared faith. Adoration brings this to mind and can gradually lead to a greater spiritual consciousness of the Eucharist by placing the sacrament at the forefront of parish life. This can bring, for the parishioners, not only a deeper union between themselves but also with the whole Church, which, being constituted by the Eucharist, requires of her faithful not only an obedience to her orders or deference to her counsels ‘but to share in a life, to enjoy a spiritual union.’²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ St. Cyril of Alexandria, quoted by de Lubac, *op. cit.*, 1950, 39.

²⁵⁷ Joseph Foxe, ‘The Status of the Parish in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*’, in *What Is A Parish?*, 46-47.

²⁵⁸ ‘For the faithful, territoriality [as the means of assigning parish boundaries] means that the Church is not a membership organization in which you pick and choose your place or degree of affiliation. The fact that, in the last thirty-five years or so, such a situation has come to prevail in practice, is a clear indication of the extent to which a congregational mentality has taken hold of our people’s attitude.’ Francis Cardinal George, ‘The Parish in the Mission of the Church’, in *What Is A Parish?*, 36.

²⁵⁹ De Lubac, *op cit.*, 1950, 29.

The Eucharistic sacrifice is always, regardless of the parish size or identity, a celebration not just of that place, but also of the whole Church. Indeed, it is the extent to which the parish is ‘grafted’ on the Eucharist, like a branch on the vine, that it receives the gift of salvation, ‘and shows, even in its present visible particular form, that it is the image and true presence of the one holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.’²⁶⁰ The more ‘Eucharistic’ the parish, the more Catholic, and the more the parish will reflect the communion with the Church, and in the Church, that is lived in the sacrament. One bishop, reflecting on adoration in the parishes of his diocese, spoke to this tangible witness and practice of communion, saying, ‘the experience confirms how the Eucharist makes Christians, Christians make the Eucharist and how the Eucharist constitutes the Church.’²⁶¹

4.5 Eucharistic parishes for a Eucharistic Church

For the Church to live its true apostolic vocation, its parishes, as its ‘heartbeat’, must be doing the same.²⁶² They are called to live a Eucharistic life in which the Church’s ‘foundation and wellspring’, the Paschal mystery, is ‘gathered up, foreshadowed and “concentrated” for ever in the gift of the Eucharist.’²⁶³ In this way, by being concentrated on the Eucharist, in which indeed the whole mystery of the faith is concentrated, parishes draw true nourishment from the living bread, nourishment that must be experienced anew, and not simply as habit or routine.²⁶⁴ The magisterium has increasingly called upon the whole faithful to encounter the

²⁶⁰ George, ‘The Parish in the Mission of the Church’, 30

²⁶¹ D’Ercole, ‘Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective’, 64.

²⁶² ‘The parish gives to the diocese by the fact that, if the parish is alive, the diocese is alive; the vitality of the diocese strictly depends on the vitality of its parishes.’ Francesco Coccapalmiero, *La Parrocchia: Tra Concilio Vaticano II e Codice di Diritto Canonico* (Milan: Edizione San Paolo, 2000), 21.

²⁶³ EE, 5.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

‘face of Christ,’ with John Paul II particularly using this terminology to encourage a deeper and more transforming encounter with God.²⁶⁵

Such language is significant because the apostolic identity of the Church is entirely bound up in the Eucharist, and in a Eucharist that is lived as a personal encounter, whereby the ‘face of Christ’ can be contemplated and ultimately reflected by the Lord’s followers. This is the key aspect that holiness, that living reflection of the face of Christ, plays in all apostolic endeavours:

‘We wish to see Jesus’ (Jn 12:21). This request, addressed to the Apostle Philip by some Greeks who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover, echoes spiritually in our ears too during this Jubilee Year. Like those pilgrims of two thousand years ago, the men and women of our own day — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to "speak" of Christ, but in a certain sense to "show" him to them. And is it not the Church's task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine also before the generations of the new millennium? Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first contemplated his face.²⁶⁶

This is the apostolic call that is given to the Church, in and through her parishes: to reveal Christ, and our call to communion with him, through a life rich in Eucharistic contemplation, which ‘spills over’, as it were, into missionary zeal.²⁶⁷ There can be no separation of communion from the apostolate, nor of the Eucharist from that apostolate’s source and accomplishment. In reflecting on the Eucharistic life of the parish and other communities or Christian networks, which directly impacts upon their apostolate and in turn upon the mission of the Church, we can register a note of concern from the magisterium. John Paul II referred to ‘shadows’ over the

²⁶⁵ For examples see: NMI, 1, 7, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 25, 28, 37, 42, 59; EE, 6, 7, 25, 53, 55; EE, 44; EV, 81.

²⁶⁶ NMI, 16.

²⁶⁷ Every parish is called to evangelisation, as the result of their identity of communion: ‘... In a way analogous to the operations of the Trinity *ad extra*, the parish has a mission to the world which is exercised in unity – as a juridic person. That mission is evangelisation.’ Barnett, ‘Trinity and the Parish’, in *What is a Parish?*, 178.

Church's Eucharistic faith and love, commenting that, 'in some places, the practice of Eucharistic adoration has been almost completely abandoned ... At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery ... celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet.'²⁶⁸

Any lacking in Eucharistic faith, which may be measured to some extent by signs such as falling Mass attendance, will necessarily hinder true communion within the Church and thus the fulfilment of the apostolate. For example, in the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict refers to the faithful who serve in charitable works, writing that 'it is time to reaffirm the importance of prayer in the face of the activism and ... growing secularism.'²⁶⁹ He goes on immediately to say that prayer is not an attempt to control God but rather to seek an encounter and relationship with him. It is this encounter and relationship, which can only come from a contemplation of the face of Christ, which is precisely at the heart of Eucharistic adoration.

At a time when some believe that parishes are greatly in need of apostolic revival, a lively Eucharistic faith is necessary:

The [Second Vatican] Council called for an apostolic formation for the whole Church, a renewal in the liturgy, and in formation reflecting the apostolic vocation. This fundamental dimension of the Council has hardly begun to be received. The overarching concern in parishes has been to establish convivial communities for the sake of parishioners; unity in the parish has often been sought for its own sake. Yet if the mission of the Church is to be sign and instrument of the salvation of the human race, and if the vocation to be one in Christ applies to the whole of humanity, then what unifies the community is largely to be found in its mission.²⁷⁰

That is, the parish is called to be united in the Eucharist, for the purpose of being united in the Body of Christ to the mission of the whole Church, which is the evangelisation of all peoples. In this way, parishes that are truly Eucharistic are truly

²⁶⁸ EE, 10.

²⁶⁹ DCE, 37.

²⁷⁰ Michael Sweeney, 'Can You Tell Me What a Parish is?', in *What is a Parish?*, 11.

apostolic. The Church needs parishes that are living a Eucharistic communion, for it is in this way that they can positively live their vocation as ‘the principal instrument of the Church for the apostolic formation of her members ... an apostolic vocation that flows from and interpenetrates with her vocation to holiness and her vocation to communion.’²⁷¹

4.6 The visible fruits of communion in parishes, through adoration

In the five decades since Vatican II, the magisterium has repeatedly stressed the importance of adoration in building Eucharistic parishes that live their call to communion. This emphasis can be found in the exhortations of the Popes, and in their practical examples of championing adoration, such as through the opening of an adoration chapel in St. Peter’s Basilica, to holding times of exposition during their meetings with the clergy and laity. Specifically, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have both voiced their desire to see adoration in parishes:

I would like to affirm with joy that today there is a “Eucharistic springtime” in the Church: How many people pause in silence before the Tabernacle to engage in a loving conversation with Jesus! It is comforting to know that many groups of young people have rediscovered the beauty of praying in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament. I am thinking, for example, of our Eucharistic adoration in Hyde Park, London. I pray that this Eucharistic “springtime” may spread increasingly in every parish ...²⁷²

The fruits of adoration flow from this Eucharistic ‘springtime’, that is, the desire to engage with the Eucharistic Lord. Such a desire is a grace for the individual Christian who lives that relationship, but it is equally significant for the community of Christians within the parish, for ‘a community, a Church faithful to Eucharistic

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷² Benedict XVI, Audience, 17 November 2010.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 29 January 2013). John Paul II also called for perpetual adoration in parishes, at the Seville Eucharistic Congress in June 1993. Comments available in Spanish at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm

adoration will be “ravished unto the love of what is invisible”.²⁷³ To increase in love for God, as a parish, is the first and most important reason to adore.

Racine, the founder of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist, writes of the effect of the living water that flows from the Heart of Christ through adoration of His Eucharist, that is, the effect of love for God within the parish. Through increasing the parish’s love for God it is, ‘more available to the mission, and giving all pastoral activities a greater fecundity ... despite the inevitable changes in priests, parishioners, movements. Jesus celebrated and adored is the rock on which the parish rests.’²⁷⁴ This statement holds two key ideas: first, that love of God in the Eucharist brings about pastoral fruit, which is clearly based on doctrine. And, secondly, that the steadfastness of Christ, always present and ever the same, can allow a parish to weather the many changes that, by the nature of its structure, must constantly occur.

Another measurable fruit through adoration is the spiritual discipline that can be built within a parish. Let us consider the practice, often encouraged by the magisterium, of perpetual exposition.²⁷⁵ For this to take place, parishioners support the practice by, for example, committing to a weekly holy hour, which demands of them fidelity and a certain dedication:

By making the commitment to worship one hour per week, the parishioner is free of an approach that is too sentimental, and gradually moves to adore ‘in spirit and in truth’ in an Adoration in the Church and for the Church ... [it] is a true school of fidelity, of fervour, where the encounter with Jesus becomes a true spiritual experience, independent of the consolations felt.”²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Kirby, ‘A Mystagogical Catechesis of Eucharistic Adoration’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 37-38. Kirby takes his quotation from the Preface of the Nativity in the old translation. This same section in the new translation bears quoting to emphasise his point: ‘For in the mystery of the Word made flesh a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that, as we recognize in him God made visible, we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible.’ Preface of the Nativity, 1.

²⁷⁴ Racine, ‘Spiritual Fruits of Adoration in Parishes’, 208.

²⁷⁵ See footnote 257.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 202-203. Racine also quotes the testimony of Fr. Michael Pieron, Parish Priest of Vichy, 2005: ‘The great spiritual teachers stress that all spiritual progress requires regularity, fidelity and asceticism. The rhythm of one hour of adoration permits us to enter into a weekly schedule that is

Finally, adoration offers the parish community a means to be united in prayer, beyond the time allotted to the Eucharistic sacrifice. By adoring the Lord together, we become united to others in Christ, as well as to him, as one community. Every member of the parish, and it must be particularly noted that this includes those who are unable to receive Holy Communion, can come before the Eucharist and, in the silence, or in times of communal singing, the reading of scripture, or recitation of the rosary, be united to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

4.7 Conclusion

The recent emphasis of the magisterium on communion is eminently applicable to the laity, who by the nature of their mission in the world are called to be a force for communion. As any emphasis on communion must stem from the Eucharist, which is the source of true unity, so must the layperson's life of communion be derived from this source. Along with her members, the Church, which exists for communion, draws her vocation from her Eucharistic identity, and is a true force for unity only as far as she is united to her source, in Christ in the Eucharist. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that adoration is a way to respond to that vocation, being a way to build communion with God and with others.

convenient for everyone. It allows us to place Jesus before any activity, as in the gospel passage of Martha and Mary, where Jesus reminds us, through the testimony of Mary seated at Jesus' feet, that one thing alone is necessary; or in Gethsemane, when Jesus asks to Peter, "Simon, do you sleep? Have you not the strength to watch one hour?" *Ibid.*, 202-203.

Chapter 5 Mary, model of adoration

This paper has attempted to demonstrate the applicability of adoration to the complex apostolate of the laity, one that responds to the temporal reality while being rooted in a sacramental life of prayer and evangelisation. As we have seen in chapter 4, this is tied to the laity's membership of the Church, and the call to communion as a member of the Body of Christ. With this in mind, it seems right to look to Mary. At the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers chose to conclude *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, with a chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary, a decision that marked Mariology and ecclesiology as intrinsically linked,²⁷⁷ and established a clear directive for the faithful to incorporate Mary into their Christian life in a robust and practical manner.²⁷⁸

In the call of the laity to lives of holiness, Mary, as the most holy of God's creatures, has an indispensable role both as example and as intercessor. As a wife and mother, who, in her life on earth, was never removed from the temporal reality, she offers a particular witness to the laity. In this chapter we will examine her role of example and intercessor for the laity, particularly in the light of adoration. We will review the model of Mary as adorer of Christ during her life on earth, examine the contemplative attitude of her heart, her proximity to the Eucharist within the Church, and the extent to which Mary's adoration can be seen as directed towards the apostolate.

²⁷⁷ For a discussion on what he terms the 'colossal advance in Mariology' at the Second Vatican Council, see Juan Luis Bastero, *Mary, Mother of the Redeemer* (Four Courts Press: Dublin, 2006), 54-62.

²⁷⁸ 'Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.' LG, 67.

5.1 Mary, model of adoration of Christ

As discussed in chapter 2, all Christians share a call to contemplation, to which Eucharistic adoration is a manner of prayer aptly suited. Furthermore, this call to contemplation is most truly not an outward physical pose, or even particular ‘type’ of prayer, but rather the attitude of the heart. If we consider that adoration, if lived as a means to more intensely allow the Eucharist to permeate life beyond the confines of the Mass, is at its essence also an attitude of the heart, we can allow the examples of Mary’s contemplation to reveal the model for our own. John Paul II said that ‘the contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary,’²⁷⁹ and indeed it is possible to read particularly the Annunciation and infancy narratives as an extended act of adoration of Jesus, by his mother:

No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when she conceived him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When at last she gave birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she ‘wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger’ (Lk 2:7).²⁸⁰

Her particular relationship to Christ, one which can be imitated but never replicated by another Christian, indeed makes her the pre-eminent adorer of the Lord. This particular relationship is marked however by faith and love, even more so than it is by her motherhood.²⁸¹ For it was her perfect love, possible because of her

²⁷⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. English translation: The Rosary of the Virgin Mary (16 October 2002), 10 (Hereafter, RVM).

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ ‘Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ ... to His brethren, that is, His kindred after the flesh, who believed not in Him, what profit was there in that being of kin? Thus also her nearness as a mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh.’ Augustine, *Of Holy Virginit*y, 3. See also: Lk 11:27-28 and Mk 3:31-35.

Immaculate heart, that drew Mary into a life of meditation upon her Son, revealing adoration as the natural consequence of intimate and steadfast love. This loving adoration is modelled perfectly in Mary, who is revealed in scripture as being truly contemplative, marvelling, wondering, and keeping all things in her heart (cf Lk 2:19, 33, 51). She has the grace of a particularly meditative attitude, whose gaze was penetrating, and in this way perceiving, John Paul II suggests, the hidden feelings of Christ.²⁸²

That Mary's adoration of Christ stems from her love for him is significant in studying her example to the faithful. Her desire for the Word, and subsequent reception of him within her womb, recalls the exhortation of Benedict XVI that without spiritual communion our sacramental communion bears little fruit,²⁸³ for it is in Mary's desire for Christ, even before the Annunciation, that she profits most. In her song of joy, the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55), Mary quotes the scriptures, worshipping the Lord who has fulfilled his promise in her. Thus, Mary demonstrates that an attitude of adoration comes from the desire of the heart for the presence of Christ, which must include a deep awareness of the story of Israel and the need for redemption.²⁸⁴ In this way, we can understand that knowledge of the scriptures is as significant in the lives of modern laity as it was for the young girl who was visited by the Archangel Gabriel in Nazareth:

Eucharistic adoration is enkindled then, not only when the Sacred Host is withdrawn from the tabernacle and exposed to our gaze, but even before that, when the Word of God is proclaimed, repeated, prayed, and treasured in the heart. The seeds planted in the corporate *lectio divina* of the Sacred Liturgy – Holy Mass and the Divine Office – and in the solitary *lectio divina* that the Sacred Liturgy shapes and inspires come to fruition in silent Adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

²⁸² RVM, 10.

²⁸³ See particularly Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, 97–98.

²⁸⁴ 'The inspired impulse of Eucharistic Adoration must necessarily be traced back to the hearing of the Word, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets" (Lk 24:27).' Kirby, 'A Mystagogical Catechesis of Eucharistic Adoration', 24.

Eucharistic Adoration presupposes a long familiarity with the Word of God received and sung in the liturgical assembly, repeated and prayed in *lectio divina*, pondered and held in the heart.²⁸⁵

Adoration, as demonstrated by Mary, is not only linked to the physical act of being before the Eucharist, but the desire of the heart to worship God. It is this desire that makes her the model of adoration of Christ, revealed in the spirit of contemplation that radiates from her at the Annunciation, in the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah, in the stable at Bethlehem, at the presentation in the temple, at the finding of the child Jesus in Jerusalem, at the wedding at Cana, and in the darkest of hours on Good Friday. Just as our love for Christ is united to the most perfect love of Mary, our adoration is not separated from hers, writes Eymard, but rather it is an act of sharing ‘the life of Mary on earth when she adored the Word Incarnate in her virginal womb, when she adored Him in the Crib, on Calvary, in the divine Eucharist.’²⁸⁶

As we adore, we become more like Mary, that is, Christocentric. This is why Mary should never be a hindrance or distraction to any prayer of adoration, but rather a model and companion. It is precisely for this reason that the magisterium has recommended the Rosary as fitting for times of Eucharistic adoration:²⁸⁷

It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial Magnificat for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb. With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁸⁶ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 177.

²⁸⁷ ‘Let us deepen through adoration our personal and communal contemplation, drawing upon aids to prayer inspired by the word of God and the experience of so many mystics, old and new. The Rosary itself, when it is profoundly understood in the biblical and christocentric form which I recommended in the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, will prove a particularly fitting introduction to Eucharistic contemplation, a contemplation carried out with Mary as our companion and guide.’ NMI, 18.

²⁸⁸ RVM, 1. Paul VI’s exhortation to a meditative recitation of the rosary further indicates why this prayer is commendable in adoration: ‘There has also been felt with greater urgency the need to point out once more the importance of a further essential element in the Rosary, in addition to the value of the elements of praise and petition, namely the element of contemplation. Without this the

5.2 Mary, model of adoration for the laity

Benedict XVI declared that Mary was the ‘teacher’ of adoration, ‘because no one has been able better than Mary to contemplate Jesus with a gaze of faith and to accept in his or her heart the deep resonance of his human and divine presence.’²⁸⁹ That this is true for a life lived in the midst of the temporal reality is key to understanding Mary’s significance in guiding the laity in adoration. In the midst of an often chaotic and challenging world, Mary is a model of adoration as one who perfectly lived her active life as a wife and mother with a truly contemplative spirit. In these modern times, a ‘time of continual movement which often leads to restlessness, with the risk of “doing for the sake of doing,”’²⁹⁰ Mary shows us how to live out one’s temporal existence while being grounded in prayer and contemplation, that is, how to live the lay vocation.

It should be noted that Mary, while consecrated in virginity to the Lord, still lived a life of normality within the temporal order.²⁹¹ Her ‘ordinary’ life in Nazareth, a life of marriage and motherhood, was made extraordinary through her proximity to, and love for, Christ. Indeed, as Benedict XVI puts it, the attitude of her heart towards Jesus is the secret of true adoration. ‘Her humble and simple heart was ever pondering the mystery of Jesus, in whom she adored the presence of God and his

Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation is in danger of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas and of going counter to the warning of Christ: "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Mt. 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are unfolded.’ Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultis* (2 February 1974), 47.

²⁸⁹ Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, 10 June 2012.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 06 June 2013).

²⁹⁰ NMI, 15.

²⁹¹ The long-held tradition of Mary’s consecration to the Lord is celebrated by the Church with the feast of the Presentation of Mary at the Temple on the 21st of November.

redeeming love,²⁹² he says. No other person ‘has ever devoted all her life to the contemplation of the face of Christ and the Heart of Christ as faithfully and lovingly,²⁹³ making her the greatest role model of a heart of humility and love, which should be the fruit of adoration.

Mary’s humility is a willingness to be receptive to God and to his will. This marks an openness that is ‘neither commonplace nor greatly prized in a post-modern world where self-sufficiency and radical autonomy have become ideals.’²⁹⁴ In this way, we can see that Mary’s capacity to be receptive, which is key to an adoration that is undertaken in spirit and truth, is a quality extremely relevant to the modern Christian. This receptivity, in turn, is absolutely necessary for the Christian’s Eucharistic faith, as the Flesh and Blood of Christ present in form of bread and wine ‘is a mystery of faith which so greatly transcends our understanding as to call for sheer abandonment to the word of God,’²⁹⁵ says John Paul II. In light of this, ‘there can be no one like Mary to act as our support and guide in acquiring this disposition.’²⁹⁶

The receptivity of Mary to the movement of the Holy Spirit takes place within the context of the struggles of the Christian vocation, particularly one which is directly engaged in the world. That is, ‘Mary’s *Fiat* did not lift her out of the necessary puzzlement, anxiety and pain which often arises from the radical nature of the Christian vocation.’²⁹⁷ Indeed, while Mary experienced the deep suffering of discipleship, as prophesied by Simeon (Lk 2:35), predominantly in her vigil at

²⁹² Benedict XVI, Angelus, 10 June 2007.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 02 April 2013).

²⁹³ Mother Adela Galindo, ‘Loving Jesus in the Eucharist with Mary’, in *From Adoration to Evangelisation*, 55.

²⁹⁴ Donald DeMarco, ‘The Virgin Mary and the Culture of Life’, in *The Virgin Mary and Theology of the Body* (Ascension Press: Pennsylvania, 2005), 75.

²⁹⁵ EE, 54.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Francis J. Maloney SDB, *Mary: Woman and Mother* (Wipf & Stock: Oregon, 1988), 27.

Calvary, she also lived the more ordinary sufferings of Christian life, that is, daily acts of faith and love. As she lacked the grace of the beatific vision, Mary, like every lay person, ‘had to proceed through the rest of her life, ‘treasuring in her heart’ the mysteries revealed to her, never fully understanding, but patiently waiting for God’s time and God’s ultimate answer.’²⁹⁸

Allowing for all this, we can understand that Mary’s adoration was undertaken, in essence, as a lay person, with all the struggles, burdens and temptations to doubt that come as a Christian in the temporal order. The fidelity to love and to adoration of God within her ordinary life, and firmly planted in the world, is the fidelity that each lay person is called to:

She remains the model for all Christians. With the Savior Himself, she remained hidden at Nazareth, united to Him in sweetness and humility, in the accomplishment of daily duty and domestic labors, in patience and prayer. We know of no miracle she performed, no extraordinary action, but she loved God with all her heart, all her soul, all her mind, and all her strength. This is the first commandment. And she loved her neighbour as herself. ‘There is no other commandment greater than these’ (Mk 12:30-31).²⁹⁹

Mary’s heart was steadfast in its attitude of adoration, even when physically separated from Christ. John Paul II affirms that the memories of Jesus were ‘impressed upon her heart,’ in such a way that these memories, which were always with her, even when Christ was not, were to be like a “rosary” which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.³⁰⁰ This act of recalling the presence of Christ is an important model for the layperson in the world who, unlike priests, religious and many consecrated men and women, do not always have regular or convenient access to the Blessed Sacrament. Mary can be a model for adoration, even

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Pope Pius XII, Audience with pilgrims at the Shrine of St. Anne of Auray, 26 July 1954, in *Our Lady: Papal Teachings*, 373.

³⁰⁰ RVM, 11.

when separated from Christ, and this is extremely significant for the laity, who can learn from her to have a spirit of adoration even when separated physically from the tabernacle, as is often the reality.

In a sense, Mary offers, in the example of her adoration, a way to integrate Christ into the many broad aspects of one's life, which remains the call of the laity today. Her heart's attitude of adoration was not confined to the years Christ spent under her own roof but permeated every part of her existence. Christ 'filled' Mary and all her thoughts and actions, so that everything about him was 'kept in her heart' (Lk 2:51). This calls to mind the words of Benedict XVI, when he writes that the radical newness of the Eucharist is that our worship of God should 'permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, ...lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God.'³⁰¹

5.3 The proximity of Mary to the Eucharist, in relation to the Church

As we have seen in the previous chapter, a lay Christian's vocation to the apostolate is intrinsically linked to their call to communion to the body of Christ, the Church. Thus, the model that Mary is for the whole Church in her relationship to the Blessed Sacrament holds great meaning for the laity in entering more deeply into their own Eucharistic vocation. To grasp the significance of the figure of Mary in the devotion of adoration, we must ultimately consider her proximity to the Eucharist and the model she is for the entire Church.³⁰² She can guide us towards, or point us to, the

³⁰¹ SC, 71.

³⁰² Mary's proximity to the Eucharist is described by John Paul II in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: 'Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist. If the Church and the Eucharist are inseparably united, the same ought to be said of Mary and the Eucharist. This is one reason why, since ancient times, the commemoration of Mary has always been part of the Eucharistic celebrations of the Churches of East and West.' EE, 57.

Eucharist, because of her proximity to Christ, her sharing in the Eucharistic banquet, and her interior disposition. John Paul II writes of this, saying that she ‘is a “woman of the Eucharist” in her whole life. The Church, which looks to Mary as a model, is also called to imitate her in her relationship with this most holy mystery.’³⁰³

Mary’s life is an anticipation, according to John Paul II, of the Church’s Eucharistic faith:

In continuity with the Virgin's faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine ... Mary also anticipated, in the mystery of the incarnation, the Church's Eucharistic faith. When, at the Visitation, she bore in her womb the Word made flesh, she became in some way a “tabernacle” – the first “tabernacle” in history – in which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed himself to be adored by Elizabeth, radiating his light as it were through the eyes and the voice of Mary. And is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?³⁰⁴

The Church cannot separate Mary from the Eucharist, to such an extent that D’Ercole stated, ‘Jesus recalls Mary; the Eucharist recalls Mary.’³⁰⁵ This is entirely linked to the Church, for Mary, as Mother of the Church, must also be Mother of the Eucharist.³⁰⁶ In a sense, the Eucharist would not be ‘possible’ without Mary, who gave birth to the flesh we receive, or as Augustine phrased it, ‘suckled our bread.’³⁰⁷ We should consider, then, Mary’s relationship to the Church, in understanding the Church’s devotion to the Eucharist, and the bearing that this might have upon a

³⁰³ EE, 53.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁰⁵ D’Ercole, ‘Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective’, 65.

³⁰⁶ ‘Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist. If the Church and the Eucharist are inseparably united, the same ought to be said of Mary and the Eucharist.’ EE, 57.

³⁰⁷ Augustine, *Sermons, (184-229Z) on the Liturgical Seasons*. Vol. III/6. (New Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1993), 184. See also: ‘Since she is the Mother and Mediatrix of all graces, the Eucharist is her gift to the world, and in a particular manner to us priests, because the Host we consecrate and adore is the *verum Corpus natum de Maria Virgine*.’ Cardinal Gilroy, letter from 1954, quoted in *Handbook of the Daily Holy Hour* (Sacerdotal Union of Daily Adoration USA: 1960), 33-34.

practice, such as adoration, which aims to foster that devotion. For the laity to live their apostolate, which by the nature of being Catholic is also Eucharistic, it must thus have a Marian dimension, or be understood in the context of Mary.

The Marian dimension of the Eucharist reveals a truly feminine way for each Christian to live as members of the Church and be nourished, which must be preceded by a receptivity to that nourishment, by the Sacraments. McPartlan suggests that the Church must learn this from Mary, who was nourished by the Bread of Life, living within her:

Christ was born of Mary in Bethlehem so as to be born in each of us individually, through Baptism in the Church. By the sacraments, the Church maternally brings Christ to birth in each of us, and each of us is maternal in accepting and nurturing this Christ born in us and in working to bring him to birth in others.³⁰⁸

This receptivity of Mary, which was truly maternal in its ‘accepting and nurturing’ is the vocation of all Christians. It is also the essence of the Church, and in a sense we learn from Mary what it means to ‘be’ the Church, particularly in regards to the Eucharist. The Sacrament is by no means ‘static’, but rather living Flesh upon which the Christian is called to feed, and thus grow. The extent to which the Church, that is, the entirety of the faithful, the majority of which are lay people, is growing in faith through the Eucharist must be influenced by its state of receptivity.

In this way, the Church must look to Mary as the model of receptivity, of *femininity*. De Lubac explains that this quality of femininity, ‘is the quintessence of creatureliness, of the world. God is the “masculine”, He does not need to be fertilised. However, the world does need to be fertilised.’³⁰⁹ Who then was most

³⁰⁸ Paul McPartlan, ‘Mary for Teilhard and de Lubac’, 18 November, 1987, for the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 10.

³⁰⁹ Henri de Lubac, ‘Cento domande a von Balthasar’, interview in the Italian magazine, *30 Giorni*, 6 June 1984, pp.8-18, 75-78; quotations on 14-15 (quoted by Paul McPartlan, ‘Mary for Teilhard and de Lubac’, 18 November, 1987, for the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 2).

fruitful, or receptive, can we say, but Mary? And, in that sense, says De Lubac, she is ‘in closest proximity to the Church,’³¹⁰ which must, in receiving the Eucharist, allow itself to be fertilised by the Flesh and Blood of Christ, whose presence is given not only during the moment of the Eucharistic sacrifice but who remains, in the tabernacles, like the beating heart of the Church. By drawing close to Christ in Eucharistic adoration, the Christian grows in receptivity to him, allowing themselves to become like the good soil that could hear, or receive, the word and hold fast to it (cf. Lk 8:15).

Mary’s receptivity was a heart that sought the heart of Christ, and remained steadfast in adoration, contemplation, wonder, and pondering. While this is true of the Mary of scripture and of history, it is also true explicitly in regards to her relationship to the Eucharist, as ‘the first and incomparable adorer of Christ in the Eucharist.’³¹¹ Not only does she ‘show us the blessed fruit of her womb’, by being the ‘living Monstrance,’³¹² but she demonstrates a total receptivity to Christ that must bear on the Church’s living of the Eucharistic mystery. Adoration is a way for the Church to fulfil the model given in Mary, in that we can say that as we adore, we become more like the Mother of Christ.

5.4 The Church as the one that ‘shows’ Christ to the world

Once Christ has been received, he must be shared. This is at the heart of the Church’s mission and of the apostolate of every Christian, and is, as we have seen above, witnessed so explicitly in the life of Mary. In particular, we consider that

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ Benedict XVI, address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Committee for the International Eucharistic Congress, 9 November 2006. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm (accessed 15 May 2013).

³¹² Pope Pius X, Address to Franciscans, 12 November 1810, in *Our Lady: Papal Teachings*, 185.

Mary's first act after the Annunciation, at which Christ was conceived in her womb, was a missionary one, a going forth to bring Christ's presence to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1:39). Mary, the model of the Church, innately understood the need not only to speak about Christ, but to physically present him to the other. As the one overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, Mary responded to the prompting of the Spirit, 'the principal agent of evangelisation,'³¹³ who then in the depths of Elizabeth's conscience 'causes the word of salvation to be accepted and understood.'³¹⁴

There is an important lesson in this example. While the Eucharistic host, whether exposed in a monstrance or reposed within a tabernacle, may seem to human thinking a difficult sign to be grasped, let us consider the sign of Christ completely hidden in the newly-pregnant Mary. Mary allowed the Holy Spirit to announce to Elizabeth the salvation present in the child within her womb, with her proclamation to follow afterwards. Mary's faith in the Lord's presence, as demonstrated in her song of praise to respond to Elizabeth's acknowledgement of Christ, in a sense *allowed* the Holy Spirit to move powerfully.

Faith is the central attitude, which 'unlocks the figure of Mary,'³¹⁵ and, indeed, Elizabeth acknowledges this in their encounter, when she exclaims, "Blessed is she who believed" (Lk 1:45). Her faith, which in the scene of the Visitation is revealed to be Eucharistic, calls on the Holy Spirit in a way that must be the example for the Church in living her Eucharistic apostolate. That is, Mary shows us that the Church must have faith that by presenting Christ in the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit will be working to bring acceptance and understanding in the hearts of those who encounter the Real Presence.

³¹³ EN, 75.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 'The Sign of the Woman', in *Mary: the Church at the Source* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 48.

At the same time, there is another significant element to Mary's conduct, or rather her way of being, in her meeting with Elizabeth. It is what Teilhard de Chardin termed "passive action", the action that functions simply by the transmission through us of divine energy [grace].³¹⁶ This passive action, or docility, of Mary, is apparent in how little she appeared to *do* for Elizabeth to receive and welcome the presence of Christ. De Chardin believed that this great docility to the Holy Spirit was possible because of Mary's Immaculate Conception, granting her the perfection of purity amongst all creatures:

Purity, in spite of outward appearances, is essentially an active virtue, because it concentrates God in us and on those who are subject to our influence. In our Lord, all modes of lower, restless, activity disappear within this single, luminous, function of drawing God to oneself, of receiving him and letting him penetrate one's being. To be active in such a way and such a degree, Our Lady must have been brought into existence in the very heart of grace, for no later justification, no matter how immediate, could replace this constitutive, inborn, perfection of the purity that watched over the birth of her soul.³¹⁷

Clearly, by de Chardin's explanation, purity or docility, the capacity for God's grace to work through one, would be absolutely necessary for evangelisation. That purity, which stems from a oneness with God, allowed Christ to cut to the hearts of those he encountered and called to conversion, from the Samaritan woman by the well, to the blind man on the road from Jericho. In example after example, the Gospels reveal Christ's effectiveness as an evangelist, as he reveals the Father time and again. While there are far fewer examples of Mary in evangelisation, they are just as telling. We have already examined her visit to Elizabeth in Judah. Another important encounter is when she speaks to the servants at the wedding in Cana, a scene that, like the visitation, has significant Eucharistic overtones.

³¹⁶ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Making of a Mind* (London: Collins, 1965), 149.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Let us consider Cana, and Mary's action there. As with the Visitation, she says and does very little. Her two statements, the first telling Jesus that, 'They have no wine' (Jn 2:3), and the second to the servants about her son, 'Do whatever he tells you,' (Jn 2:5), result in the first sign of the Messiah, and the transformation of over 100 gallons of water into the best of wine. In Mary at Cana there is a complete surrender to the will of God, of, as de Chardin puts it, 'receiving him and letting him penetrate one's being.' Her docility to the Holy Spirit allowed God's glory to manifest and Christ's disciples to believe in him (Jn 2:11), which was surely a crucial moment of evangelisation. Those same disciples must have recalled that miracle when, at the last supper, Jesus spoke about wine being transformed into his own blood.

At the visitation and the miracle at Cana, Mary's faith in, and openness to, God made for a particular dynamism of evangelisation, an evangelisation which was oriented towards a Eucharistic faith. To ask people to believe in what they could not see, Mary indeed did *not* ask, but rather allowed God, through her faith and loving union with him, to effect this belief. This holds an important lesson for the necessity for the Church, which proposes to the world an invisible God and a life of grace through the sacraments, of faith and of purity or docility to the Spirit, as witnessed by Mary. Indeed, the communion of the laity with the Eucharist is significant not only for their own Eucharistic faith but for evangelisation, for the increase in faith and love in each Christian, and in the Church, which allows the Holy Spirit to work more powerfully in reaching others.

5.5 Mary, model of adoration as directed to the apostolate

Mary's cooperation with the Holy Spirit in the mission of evangelisation and, in a particular way, her capacity to reveal Christ in a Eucharistic sense, stem clearly from the graces of her Immaculate conception, but it must also be noted that these graces are very much lived out in a spirit of adoration. Mary reveals that the 'showing' of Christ comes as a natural consequence of an adoring heart. As discussed in Chapter 3, evangelisation should proceed from prayer and contemplation, and Mary demonstrates that adoration is indeed a 'fuel' for the apostolate.

John Paul II expressed a need for the Church to better understand 'true Eucharistic piety,'³¹⁸ which is, in reality, the setting ablaze on the earth the fire of evangelisation that Christ longed for (Lk 12:49). In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* he writes of the saints and Mary as witnesses of the 'great interpreters'³¹⁹ of a Eucharistic faith that is directed to the apostolate:

In them the theology of the Eucharist takes on all the splendour of a lived reality; it becomes 'contagious' and, in a manner of speaking, it 'warms our hearts'. Above all, let us listen to Mary Most Holy, in whom the mystery of the Eucharist appears, more than in anyone else, as a mystery of light. Gazing upon Mary, we come to know the transforming power present in the Eucharist. In her we see the world renewed in love.³²⁰

This renewal of the world in love is the apostolate. Mary, who gazed upon her son in love and faith, as he hung upon the Cross, reveals to all Christians the source of the apostolate. That is, Mary embodies the heart that, in uniting itself to Christ in the Eucharist, through a faith that permeates her entire existence, is consumed by the love of God for the world. Eucharistic adoration may appear passive, just as Mary's contemplation of Christ may have seemed like a simple gaze. And yet, as a means to

³¹⁸ EE, 62.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

prolong the graces of the Mass, and to allow that permeation of Eucharistic faith into the many corners of one's life, adoration, like Mary's contemplation, is ultimately a totally active participation in the renewing power of God's love.

The love of God, which the apostolate is built on and directed towards spreading upon earth, can be fuelled by adoration, because it is the drawing near to that love's embodiment in Christ's sacrifice, present within the Eucharist. The intimate relationship of Mary to the Eucharist, and capacity to receive and respond to its mystery, reveals her as 'the model which made the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist its own.'³²¹ Mary could unite her sacrifice to the sacrifice of the Eucharist because she had adored the flesh of Christ on the Cross, and integrated the deepest meaning of those hours into the depths of herself.

Indeed, what could be more 'action-filled' than the union of a Christian's heart to the sacrifice of the Cross, which should not be separated from Eucharistic adoration, as this is the worship of the flesh of the Crucified One. In a sense, every look of Mary, from the look of awe upon the baby in the manger, to the pondering as Jesus lay in the arms of Simeon, to her hopeful gaze at Cana, is directed to the Paschal Mystery, just as the life of Jesus was similarly directed to this manifestation of his glory. Mary shows us that in adoration we are indeed participating most powerfully in God's desire for the accomplishment of the apostolate with a radically 'active passivity'.

De Lubac wrote on Teilhard's understanding of passivity, which can be revealing for this topic, if we read it in the light of Mary's adoration of the Cross. He argued that passivity, or docility, which 'enables God to be active in and through

³²¹ D'Ercole, 'Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective', 65.

us,³²² is never ‘supine or demeaning, [but] for Teilhard the Cross is “the absolute synthesis of all passivities” and in it lies the supreme Activity.’³²³ In other words, in her adoration, Mary was united to the supreme activity, that of Christ in his life and ultimately in his Passion.

Mary’s passivity was not only that she ‘allowed God to work’ through her, but that God’s mission was her mission. Her life of contemplation, in which her gaze was never diverted from Christ, allowed God to fill her with his own desire for the salvation of souls, and in this way, D’Ercole asserts, she ‘is the model of Adoration which becomes apostolate.’³²⁴ This stems, he says, from Mary’s unity to Christ, which is the model for our union with him through our Eucharistic faith, because, ‘in the Eucharist, God is within us and we are within Him. The dynamic pierces us and needs to be diffused through us unto the entire world because His love transforms the world.’³²⁵

Every type of prayer and work of the apostolate is aimed at the diffusion of God’s love through us and into the world. Mary reveals a particular capacity for this to occur through contemplation, however, which is significant for all Christians but has a particular educative aspect for lay people. While the laity are undoubtedly called to heroic effort in evangelisation and mission, they are also most often called to the apostolate through daily work, family life, and their particular temporal circumstances. For many, perhaps as they grow old, or possibly because of financial constraints, or even perhaps a lack of pastoral support, the active nature of the apostolate may seem unrealistic. With this in mind, let us consider the manner in

³²² Henri De Lubac, *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin* (Burns & Oates, London, 1965), 68.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ D’Ercole, ‘Eucharistic Adoration as a Way of Life: A Pastoral Perspective’, 65.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

which Eymard proposes that Mary is the model, in her adoration, for the living out of the apostolate:

Not everybody can preach Jesus Christ by word of mouth, nor labor directly at the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of souls, but every adorer has the mission of Mary at the feet of Jesus: the apostolic mission of prayer, of Eucharistic prayer at the foot of the throne of grace and mercy. Eucharistic prayer has an excellence all its own: it goes straight to the Heart of God like a flaming dart; it makes Jesus work, act, and relive in His Sacrament and releases His power. The adorer does still more: he prays through Jesus Christ and unites himself to our Lord's role as Intercessor with the Father and divine Advocate for His redeemed brethren.³²⁶

Mary shows us what it means to be conformed to Christ, through contemplation. We can see that her zeal for the apostolate was fuelled by an adoration that was not out of place in 'ordinary' life. Her contemplative heart was at all times directed towards the apostolate, so that whether in the going about of daily temporal duties, or the more marked moments of evangelisation, it was a spirit of adoration that allowed Mary to receive, and then to reflect and transmit, Christ.

5.6 Conclusion

For the Christian to be truly united to the apostolate, Christ must permeate their being. Mary shows that this takes place through faith, love and a deep desire for intimacy with God, which is nourished and developed through contemplation. Her Eucharistic faith is the model for the Church, and her 'ordinary' life provides the ideal example for lay people in their pursuit of a life in which their call to the Christian mission stems from their union to Christ in prayer and contemplation. Mary is the model of adoration, in her own life 2000 years ago, and in her ongoing role as Mother of the Church.

³²⁶ Eymard, *op. cit.*, 189-190.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the apostolate of the laity and the way in which adoration, as emphasised by the magisterium, can play a significant role in that apostolate. Through an overview of prayer, mission and communion, and the example of Mary, this thesis has examined the complexity of the apostolate of the laity. While it is a complexity that undoubtedly requires a nuanced response from each layperson, as this paper has sought to demonstrate, the layperson is ultimately united to the Church through their baptism and reception of the Sacraments, of which the Eucharist is at the centre. Eucharistic adoration is one means, therefore, whereby each layperson, regardless of the diversity of their spiritual way and temporal situation, can experience the presence and working of the Eucharist outside of its celebration in the Mass.

In studying this particular topic, three areas for further study become apparent. They are: theological study in the area of adoration, the liturgical guidelines for adoration, and the actual implementation and influence of adoration at a parish or diocesan level. While these areas were not within the scope of this thesis, they bear further consideration.

First, in considering the need for theological study in this area, we can see that the magisterium has repeatedly emphasised that adoration is a powerful tool in prayer and evangelisation. That this is deeply applicable to the laity is apparent in the writings themselves, as demonstrated throughout this paper, and in the fact that many of them, as well as many public statements, are actually addressed to the laity. This demonstrates a relationship between the lay apostolate and adoration that is worth considering, and yet because most of the output in this area has come from the magisterium it highlights a need for greater theological study. It would appear that

the magisterium is leading the way on this topic, which subsequently invites further theological reflection.

In regards to liturgical practice, adoration is remarkable in that it is so widespread, and so encouraged by the magisterium, and yet there is little liturgical guidance given. While none of the criticisms addressed in chapter 1 were directly related to liturgical practice, they pointed to a need for adoration to always be understood in relationship to the Mass. Liturgical practice has an important role in ensuring this, and likewise in ensuring that adoration is conducted reverently and prayerfully. This is an area that bears consideration and further study.

Finally, as the implications of this paper are eminently pastoral, there may be an impetus for further study of the impact of adoration upon the spiritual lives of the laity, or the Church at large, particularly at a parish or diocesan level. Such a study could complement further theological study, as there is undoubtedly a need for both types of research in this area. This became apparent in researching the area of communion in parishes for chapter 4, as it emerged that little theology has been written in the area of the parish, and yet there are a wide variety of pastoral initiatives designed specifically for parishes. When John Paul II said that ‘unless we follow a spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose,’³²⁷ he was speaking in regards to communion, but he could also have been speaking about any number of external structures or initiatives within parish life. For adoration to be better understood and better implemented, a more rigorous theological approach should be coupled with pastoral and practical study.

While these areas invite closer examination, this thesis has demonstrated, through the lens of magisterial teaching, the eminent suitability of adoration as a

³²⁷ NMI, 43

means for the laity to live their apostolate of prayer and mission, in union with the Body of Christ. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there has been an extensive body of commentary on adoration by the magisterium since the Second Vatican Council, which has been greatly applicable to the laity. Throughout the research cited in this paper, it is apparent that the magisterium is calling upon the laity to respond to their apostolate within the context of a Eucharistic spirituality, of which adoration has a significant role.

We can see that through adoration, lay people are lead to a deeper union with Christ and given a zeal for evangelisation, parishes and communities are imbued with a spirit of prayer and communion, and the Church is enriched in the dynamism of her Eucharistic worship. In other words, the prayer of adoration is a fuel for the apostolate of the laity, an apostolate that calls lay people to become saints through the ongoing encounter with the love of God and the mission to carry that love into the world. Adoration provides one answer to the call of John Paul II at the turn of the millennium:

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, our Christian communities must become genuine "schools" of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love". Intense prayer, yes, but it does not distract us from our commitment to history: by opening our heart to the love of God it also opens it to the love of our brothers and sisters, and makes us capable of shaping history according to God's plan.³²⁸

³²⁸ NMI, 33.

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