

7 Lessons from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

Sam Guzman - November 17, 2014

Of all the gifts that God has given his Church, the greatest is without question the Blessed Sacrament, for it is nothing less than the body, blood, soul and Divinity of Jesus himself. In the Eucharistic host, our Divine Savior dwells among men in his fullness. He is truly God with us—what could be greater than this?

If the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus himself, and holiness is found in imitating Christ, then the Blessed Sacrament is a school of holiness. Today, I want to spend a few moments reflecting on the characteristics of Jesus in the Eucharist and what his presence can teach us about both holiness and masculinity.

1. Humility

In the Blessed Sacrament, we see the profound humility of Jesus Christ. Here, the Eternal Wisdom of God who made all things, the brightness of the Eternal Father, condescends to come among us in the form of the most ordinary food. After all, bread is simple fare, the food of the poor. Unlike a fine cut of meat, bread is almost always eaten as a side that is hardly noticed.

If we are to imitate Christ, we must first and foremost practice humility. The servant is not greater than his Master. We must be content to be unnoticed, unpraised, and unappreciated. We must give all glory to God, choosing to be humble and unassuming—like a piece of bread.

2. Silence

Men have always cherished quiet strength, strength that is demonstrated more by deeds than empty words. In the Eucharistic host, Jesus greets us with complete silence. He is ready to listen to all that we have to say, and he only speaks in return when we have quieted our hearts and are completely silent as he is. And finally, he is ready to act on our behalf if we only have confidence in his promises.

The saints constantly praise the virtue of silence, and we are warned that we will be judged for every idle word. Do we waste words? More than this, do we hear what others are saying? As men, we often struggle to listen, and yet listening is an act of love. Listen to your wife or those others around you who may be desperate for someone to pay attention.

3. Love

Almost every Eucharistic miracle on record has the host turning into the flesh of a human heart. This is not random. In the Blessed Sacrament, Christ's beating heart burns with

love for us, and he longs for our love in return. On the cross, Christ literally died of a broken heart for love of sinful humanity, pouring out his precious blood to win our affection. Yes, more than anything, it is love that Jesus desires most from those whom he has redeemed, and if he could have done anything more to secure it, he would have done so.

Do you love Christ? If so, you will obey him and carry your cross after him. You will imitate him by laying down your life for others in sacrificial love.

4. Vulnerability

In the host, Christ is completely and totally vulnerable. Far too often, he is mistreated and abused, ignored and maligned, treated casually and without dignity. Yet, this is the price he willing to pay to live among his people. No matter how many times he is profaned and trampled upon, literally or figuratively, he continues to come to us again and again, saying "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Do we love in this way? Do we open our hearts to others, even though it may mean the pain of rejection? Do we forgive 70 times 7? We cannot love if we close our hearts in fear. We must be courageously vulnerable—like Christ.

5. Patience

Christ waits patiently for you and I in tabernacles and monstrances around the world. He would wait an eternity for a single visit. He waits for us to repent when we stray; he waits for our words of allegiance and affection; he waits to hear of our joys and sorrows; he waits to answer our deepest desires.

Like Christ, we too must be patient with others, especially with those who least deserve it or who try our patience the most. We must also wait with forgiving hearts for those who have harmed or abandoned us to return.

6. Poverty

During his life on earth, Christ was completely poor. He came to earth with nothing and left with nothing. In the Eucharistic host, he who created the galaxies again comes to us poor and naked. And yet, this poverty is only material, for Jesus comes to us rich in grace and in love. He ardently desires to give us all that we need if only we ask with confidence. He wants to bless us with an abundance of graces, which are the true riches of the soul.

Materialism and greed creep into our hearts so easily. Yet, we are called to follow Christ in poverty and detachment, giving generously to others of all that we have received. Give, and it will be given to you—more than you can ask or hope.

7. Presence

The gift of God's presence is the greatest gift. To the ancient Israelites, there was no greater calamity than the withdrawing of the presence of the Lord. Likewise, there was no greater comfort than the assurance of his presence.

It is the same today. If we have Jesus, we possess all things; without him, we have nothing. Yet, we do not have to travel far to find the presence of Christ—he is as close as the nearest parish, the fulfillment of the ancient “bread of the presence” in the Jewish temple. Nor is his presence an abstraction or an idea, it is real and tangible to our senses. We Catholics can joyfully and truthfully say, “The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

If we are to imitate Christ, we must be present to those who need us. How many absentee fathers and husbands there are! How many wives and children have been abandoned by the man who is called to lay down his life for them. Are you present to your family? Are your wife and children your priority? If you are a husband and father, your presence is an irreplaceable gift. Be present.

Conclusion

If we imitated Christ in the Blessed Sacrament perfectly, we would be saints. But doing so is not easy. It requires constant repentance and conversion of life; a putting off of the old man and putting on of the new. This is our calling.

I encourage all of you to find an adoration chapel and to contemplate the Blessed Sacrament. Visit Jesus and adore him, asking for the grace to follow and imitate him completely. Pour out your heart to him, tell him your hopes and fears, your wants and needs—and hear him say in return those words of sacrament and salvation, “Lo, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”